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CELIA

IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND.

BY A MODERN ANTIQUE.

"There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, — —
— — — and from thence
Magnanimous, to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CELIA.

CHAP. I.

"For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages, and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous; still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states, by which so many vices are introduced."

THE proposals of Mr. Danbury were submitted to our heroine by the Baronet next morning.—Celia put a negative on the matter instantly.

"I believe he is not very sanguine in his hopes," said Sir Harry, "nor did *I* encourage him to expect your favour; but *this* does not proceed from his *humility*, but

but rather from the *retiredness* of *your* character, which, if you were not in *all* other respects the most charming of your sex, he would be apt to term fastidious.—These are his own words," continued Sir Harry; "I did not argue the point, being assured he had to meet a refusal, which will, in all probability, make him find a new expression, by which to distinguish your cruel insensibility."

"How can a man make proposals of so serious a nature, upon an acquaintance so transient as our's?" said Celia.—"Can happiness be expected, where marriages are thus arranged?"

"Danbury has considered the matter deeply," said Sir Harry, smiling; "he has consulted his lawyer."

"How insolent!" said Celia, with unfeigned surprise.

"Yes, my dear girl, he has been with Berton, making a few necessary enquiries," continued the Baronet; "such as, what *expectations* you have—how old our good

aunt

aunt Mansfield is—whether there is any timber on the estate, &c. &c. As you may suppose, Berton was not exactly the man to whom such queries could be put with impunity; yet he replied to him in a way that by no means *damped* his passion; on the contrary, it brought him to me, as I have related."

Celia instantly comprehended those allusions of Belford, as addressed to her speculating lover, at Lady Desmond's party; and a pang of regret wrung her bosom, as she reflected that combining circumstances had in a manner compelled her to forego the favourable opinion she *had* entertained of Belford.

"If to study the *character* of the man on whom *you* will bestow your hand is so *essential* to your ideas of married life, my dear Celia," said Sir Harry, "how is it possible you can remain indifferent to my friend Belford? It must be obvious to you that *he* is most sincerely attached to you."

"I fear," said Celia, and she checked the half-

half-formed reply—"that is, I am, as Fanny says, an insensible being."

Sir Harry looked as though he was not satisfied by the *corrected* sentiment.—"I hope you are not refining *too* much," said he.—"Belford is, of all men, calculated to make your happiness; his knowledge of the world is extensive, his principles *firm*."

Celia involuntarily shook her head.

"How! you would not insinuate that he is unworthy?" said Sir Harry, with warmth.

"I applaud your zeal," said Celia; "it is what I believe to be the very essence of friendship. Forgive me, if at *this* moment I declare Mr. Belford has sunk in my estimation; I am not at liberty to say why; but circumstances, according to *my* way of thinking, have combined to make him appear less *amiable* than I once thought him."

"You are in error, I will vouch for him," said the Baronet.—"Some insidious enemy has poisoned your mind; he will rise superior to their machinations; and you, Celia—yes, I pronounce it—you will

rescind

rescind this short-lived perjury to the purest and most honourable passion that ever tortured the breast of man."

Celia was replying, when the object of their controversy was announced. The interruption caused a pause, that arrested the attention of Mr. Belford—he stood irresolute.—"If my vanity would not stand impeached by the avowal," said he, "I could be tempted to believe you were talking of me.—Was it scandal?" he continued, addressing Celia.

"I hope I *know* it was," said Sir Harry.

Celia's cheeks were suffused with blushes; she looked reproachfully towards Sir Harry, and curtsying to Mr. Belford, declared she must see her sister, and ask the use of the carriage for an hour, withdrew.

Belford endeavoured to lead the Baronet to the subject that had engrossed their conversation on his arrival. Sir Harry evaded it, after ingenuously confessing, that Miss Delacour and himself had dissented on a point of some delicacy, which

he *yet* believed would be cleared up, highly to the advantage of the injured party.—Belford was thoughtful.—"I had considered this girl as so superior to her sex in general," said Belford, "that I had not made up my mind for *any* disappointment; nay, I had flattered myself that she esteemed me; but yesterday, on a sudden, she became reserved, if not capricious; and to-day, there was none of that ingenuous sweetness so conspicuous in her character. Admitting that she has discovered her power over *my* heart, I did not think her capable of exulting in my misery: I have not presumed to avow myself; and if I had, should have expected from her *delicacy*, as from her *candour*, that consideration which a man of honour must feel his due."

"Undoubtedly," said the Baronet;—"and believe me, Belford, Celia is incapable of a conduct so unamiable. No, my friend, she is not capricious; her feelings are quick, her benevolence unbounded;—and at this moment, I consider her as the dupe

dupe of some well-dissembled artifice:—but such is the humility of her disposition, that I am persuaded there could not be a more *grateful* meed to the fondest of her admirers, than that *recantation* she would *voluntarily* accord, on the instant she discovered her error."

"Then *I* have something to expect," said Belford, with a forced smile; "for it is obvious to me that I have fallen under her *displeasure*—how, Heaven only knows: that I shall *appreciate* my restoration to her favour, I may sincerely avow: she is woven so round *my* heart, that all language must fail, in elucidating my feelings; and I know not, my dear Townly, if this precious meed will not stamp the *fate* of your friend.—I could not bear her hatred; and her *love* is what I dare not hope, though I feel I *deserve* it."

The Baronet wanted courage to reply, as his reason and observation would have suggested; and Mr. Belford, overpowered by

feelings too intense, even for friendship to witness, retired somewhat hastily.

"You will dine with us," said Sir Harry, as he followed his amiable friend through the gallery.

"If I *can*," said Belford, as he waved his hand in token of adieu.

We will leave the Baronet to his ruminations, which, we fear to state, were not *too* much in favour of *female* stability, and follow our heroine on her errand of mercy. Celia strolled through the green-house, and, after selecting a few plants, took a turn in the garden. She waited anxiously for the appearance of her anonymous friend, but she came not. Seeing the gardener, with whom she had conversed the preceding day, she asked if he had heard how the sick lady was that morning?

"No, Madam," said the man; "but her maid-servant and the child are somewhere about the grounds.—There they are," continued he, pointing to a young girl and a child in a distant walk.

Celia hastened towards them.—" How is your mistress ?" said Celia, addressing the girl.

" She is very poorly indeed to-day," said the girl.

" Is she too ill to walk in the grounds this morning ?" asked Celia.

" She is in bed," said the girl.

" Take this letter to your mistress," said our heroine.—" Perhaps this little fellow will remain with me while you go ;" and she held out her hand to the sweet boy.—The child yielded to her wish, and seating herself on a bench, she engaged the little stranger's attention, by culling a nosegay for him, and answering to his imperfect articulation, with all that softness so peculiarly attractive to children. " A mother's heart may glow with conscious pride, as she gazes on a *treasure* like this," said Celia, and she kissed the ruby lips of the smiling boy ; " but a *deserted*, a *dishonoured* woman—Good Heavens ! what must be the feelings of a *mother thus* situated, to leave

an

an innocent like this to a world that looks *down* upon the *sins* of *humble* life with fastidious scorn, to leave *thee* to a *father*, who has sent thy best protector to an early grave!—What a sad perspective!" and her thoughts wandered to Hadley; she saw the blooming boy under the care of her aunt, while *she* was relating the sad story of his entombed mother.—"She is dying, I am persuaded," said Celia, and the tears coursed down her cheeks. The child regarded her attentively—he climbed her knee, and folding his arms round her neck, kissed her tears away.—"This office is not new," said Celia; "it is a strong trait of nature.—Yes, I will protect you," said she, as she strained the unconscious child of her bounty to a bosom, in which the purest feelings of benevolence were throbbing, to an excess oppressive, though not painful. The girl returned, and presenting a note, was retiring with her charge. Celia motioned her to remain, and, breaking the seal, read as follows:—

"I FEEL

"I FEEL too ill, to say all I wish, at this moment. Madam, your condescension overpowers me. I must believe *all* you say; and, in that case, am more humbled than ever. I could have excused his loving *you*, now I *know* you; but I perceive it was a subterfuge, to cast me from his heart. He has done it effectually.—I will say more, if possible, this evening.—Heaven bless, and make you happy, as you deserve to be, prays the lost, abandoned

JESSY."

"Make my compliments to your mistress," said Celia, as she folded the billet of the fading Jessy, "and tell her I shall hope to hear from her this evening."

The girl promised to obey her order; and our heroine, taking an affectionate leave of her youthful friend, repaired to the carriage. Her reflections, in her short ride,

ride, were many and complicated; she could not *regret* that part which she had taken, in the fate of the wasting sufferer; yet that *she* had been made the *unconscious* scourge of the hapless penitent, was deeply offensive to her feelings.

"Despotic, cruel man," said Celia, mentally, "how insolent does vice make you! while *undetected*, what can *check* thy career? A husband! Surely, if I know my heart, it will *ever* remain indifferent to thy power, oh wily artificers! Worlds should not tempt me to yield *my* heart, till the faith, the morality, the *practical religion* of its *secret* choice, made the offering at once a *tribute* to your *worth*, and an humble instrument of your happiness." Yet whom to name as the *prejudged* treasurer of *that* heart, assuredly in the *possession* of its mistress, became a matter of doubt; and Celia *blushed* at the hastiness of that decision which had, in *her* eyes, made Belford the destroyer of Jessy.—"The system appears too *complicated*, too like a *professed* libertine, to attach

tach to Belford," said Celia.—" I will *suspend* my judgment, till I am *further* informed;" and, with this *qualifying* sentiment, she entered the drawing-room of Lady Townly.

" My dear Celia, you have put me to inconceivable distress, by detaining the carriage so long," said her Ladyship; " I have an immensity of business on my hands this morning."--Celia made her apologies. " Let me see," continued her Ladyship, referring to her tablets—" to Shepherd's for *lamps*, Wedgwood's and Spode's, for *novelties*, Grange's, ices—take a peep at the Marchioness of ———, just to see how *her* rooms are arranged, and adopt a style in *direct* opposition, and so avoid *servile* imitations.—I must do all this," said her Ladyship, with an appropriate apostrophe.

" It is doing a *great* deal to very little *purpose*," said Celia. " Have you considered the *expence*, Fanny?"

" *That* is an *after* consideration," said her Ladyship; " these sort of people *know* us,

us, and they put a *profit* upon our *fancies*, which amply *repays* them for the credit they give."

"Then you *know* you are imposed upon?" said Celia.

"We *guess* as much, my dear girl; but the thing is *unavoidable*, and I *never* see *my* tradespeople. Wilson is an admirable manager, and takes all this off *my* hands.—Pounds, shillings, and pence, are absolutely standing in your eyes, my dear little calculator," said Lady Townly; "dismiss the *vulgar* assemblage, and come with me; I will shew you *how* to spend hundreds with *eclat*."

Celia followed to the carriage, in the vain hope of *checking* the *projected* expenditure. They chose lamps, *recommended* by all the *trick* of *modern* flattery; they were *classical*, *designed* by an *artist* of *eminence*, and upon the *true* costume.—The *novelties* were *equally* well *introduced*; but when Celia asked their *use*, the *artizan* (for there is no such being as a tradesman

now),

now), declared they were *universally* adopted in the *higher* circles; and *all* persons who had *travelled* were assured they were *safe*, in admitting them in their *mansions*, for the *vases* of the *ancients* were objects of veneration—"But not of *imitation*," thought Celia; "and though, as an Englishwoman, I would *hail every* advance that persevering *genius* should illustrate, I can see no reason why we are to consider *bottles* and *jars* elegant or *ornamental*, because they were in use some hundred years since.—*This* is the era of human *invention*," sighed the unfashionable Celia, "of gross imposition: yet are the *imposers* less *censurable* than those on *whom* they impose? No man, however great his *talents*, shall talk *me* out of my *reason*, nor *persuade* me that the *varied* colours of the *rainbow*, when *separately* arranged, form an *appearance* perfectly *unique*; it is absolute insanity."—They proceeded to Grange's;—Celia listened to the orders of her sister.

"Let the *whole* be managed with your

usual

usual *taste,*" said her Ladyship; "do not spare."

The man promised punctuality, and they drove to the Marchioness of ——.

"Have your eyes about you, Celia," said Lady Townly; "observe the order of her rooms, that I may be correct in any of the alterations I may find it *necessary* to make."

Celia declared it was very probable that her *astonishment* might supersede her power to be accurate.

"I see you are *laughing* at me," said Lady Townly; "but these things have grown into importance of *late;* so much has been said and *written* on *style,* and the papers are so descriptive, that one is called upon to be *minute,* in order to avoid *certain* odium."

"What sacrifices are made to *common* sense, by such as are so *decidedly fashionable!*" said Celia, "as if it could be essential to your consequence in life, that the newspapers should *announce* your folly; for it

is

is folly to be *sedulous* about such trifles.—How many laugh internally at your *best* attempts, while the *cruelty* of wasting a fortune, that might, judiciously *disseminated,* relieve the wants of many, and lay up *treasures* for yourself in a world beyond this—it is the utmost stretch of supineness, ingratitude," said Celia.—" Forgive me, Fanny;—but when I *reflect* that you *refused* your assistance, when Mrs. Welgrave claimed your aid for a suffering family, and I now behold you squandering a little *fortune* on the mere gew-gaws of the day, with no purpose, save the wish of pleasing the *world,* I am tempted to *regret* that your *power* is so unbounded."

" You are quite a democrat," said Lady Townly, laughing.—" Those levelling principles, my dear Celia, would destroy *trade.*—I perceive you are the *woman* of the *people;*—but believe me, the system is falling into disrepute, since it has been discovered that *poverty,* and not *principle,* makes a *modern* patriot."

"I am

"I am only zealous where I love," said Celia.—"I have not the *vanity* to offer opinions, or a wish to dictate to you—I would *awaken* your feelings, because I am assured, that if you were once to let *reason* take the lead, your *happiness* would be perfect, which is not the case at present.—You are ever pursuing some *evanescent* pleasure, some fleeting phantom, that perishes from your memory, leaving no trace, save its *effect* on your *purse*;—it is a sad, a *lamentable* waste of life;—and, to *my unfashionable* ideas, so *painful* a contemplation, that owning such feelings, I consider myself *censurable* in remaining in London."

"In a little time, my dear Celia," said Lady Townly, "we shall leave this naughty town, and you cannot imagine how *rural* I am, when once I get into the shades."

Celia looked sceptically; but the carriage drawing up to the Marchioness's, prevented further argument. A numerous retinue of well-dressed lacqueys attended the ladies through the vestibule, while the servant

servant deputed to usher them to the drawing-room, *unliveried,* and powdered with nicest care, appeared to our heroine a more respectable *dressed* man, than many men of *rank* whom she had met in *society:* but her sister's application of the term *democrat* would by no means have suited the opinion of Celia in *this* point; for while she *secretly* lamented the *degeneracy* of *style,* so obvious in the *higher* circles, it appeared *equally inappropriate,* that a servant, in *any* capacity, should assume the garb of a *gentleman.*

After passing through a *suite* of apartments, *each* more magnificent than the *last,* they entered a boudoir, in which the Marchioness was seated, attired in the most fashionable undress.

"You *are* visible at last," said her Ladyship, raising her eye-glass.—"Well, I rejoice to see you once again.—*Entré,*" she continued, and, in the next moment, Lord Quadrige issued from a side door. "This creature asked leave to retire," said the

Marchioness;—"he thought it was Desmond's carriage, and I had felt persecution in *that* shape, and was *merciful* to his nerves."

"You are *always* considerate, and eminently *discerning*," said my Lord; "for you kindly abbreviated my *banishment*, when you discovered that *this* was the sphere in which I live, and breathe, and own the purest delight;" and taking a seat by our heroine, he breathed a long-drawn sigh, with a look and gesture perfectly in unison.

"Miss Delacour should learn the value of her preeminent *attractions*," said the Marchioness; "for I declare to you, Madam, I never heard Quadrige utter a compliment with so much *apparent* sincerity."

"I trust I shall value *each* as they *deserve*," said Celia, smiling.

"You are vastly condescending," said the Marchioness; and turning to Lady Townly, she added, in a half whisper—"Have you not delayed your sister's *entré*

somewhat

somewhat *too* long?—she is a very lovely woman—that is, she has a graceful form, and a most expressive countenance; but her *mind* appears matured beyond *youth*."

Lady Townly replied, with *expressive* regrets, "that it was entirely at the suggestion of an aunt, who had educated her sister, and would *never* have *permitted* her to come out, had *she* not devised a plea for drawing her from the vale."

Celia blushed deeply;—she heard all that was said, and her *real* motive, in her London visit, passed over her mind, with a feeling indescribably acute.

"You find London quite a *new* world," said the Marchioness, addressing Celia.

"It is very *amusing*, in some respects," said our heroine;—"but I would not *live* in it for any *length* of time."

"Well, that is astonishing!" said the lady hostess; "it is so *fascinating* to a novice.—Really I should be quite disappointed, if *I* were your sister;—for one expects to meet *entertainment* from the *re-*

marks, and wonder, and surprise, of a rural nymph;"—and a smile passed over the features of the speaker, which Celia translated a *sarcastic* sneer.

"The real lover of *nature*," said our heroine, "can never be *more* than *amused*, by the futile imitations of art:—we may *praise* and *encourage* such efforts of *genius* as improve knowledge; but we return, with sincere pleasure, to *that* scene, which, ever varying, ever new, presents at once a lesson to *mortality*, and a *motive* for our gratitude."

"Infinitely just," said the Marchioness, bowing.—"She is *advanced*," she added, turning to Lady Townly, "past the age of *universal* homage.—Is not Townly given to *lecturing*, since your *family* circle has increased?"

Lady Townly parried the effrontery of her friend, by reverting to the splendour of her Ladyship's *recent* ball.

"It was unique," said the Marchioness; "it bears the *palm* at *present*; but when

once

once *you* open your doors, all my *invention* must be exerted, or you will crush me into absolute *insignificance*."

Lady Townly apologized for having omitted to send a card to her Ladyship.—"I have a *few* friends *this* evening," said she; "but they are not those with whom *you* like to mix; that is, some very old country friends are the *ostensible* cause of the present evening meeting, and I shall be *forced* to give up a few items, in the way of *decoration*, in order to avoid the irony of Sir Peter, who has the happiest way of making one retract one's opinions, in all matters of taste."

"Who is Sir Peter?" asked the Marchioness.

"Sir Peter Berton," said Lady Townly.

"I will come, my dear Townly," said her Ladyship.—"There is something delightful in quizzing these country gentry; and their son, the elegant Berton, who is, without exception, the finest young man in England, he will be there, no doubt—

 it

it is so amusing to see the honest pair *lamenting* those *advances* which their children have made, inveighing against the *times*, and regretting that they did not make a fox-hunting 'Squire of a creature evidently born to fill the most *enviable situation* in life."

Celia sighed involuntarily;—it was a doubt with her whether *he* had not *dishonoured* his name, and bartered his *eternal* peace, from a too faithful adherence to the precepts of this erring, ill-judging world.

"Berton is going off," said Lord Quadrige, who had been deeply engaged in reading an *authentic* account of the Whip-Club's first spring meeting: "he was a very fine fellow;—but either he is cursedly poor, or sinking into obscurity, for *I* never hear him mentioned."

"How should *you?*" said the Marchioness; "your *Club* are at *present* the very point of attraction.—A *pair* of horses are *now* correct emblems of *poverty*, or a *mind* wholly without *emulation*."

Celia smiled—the Marchioness looked towards our heroine, with a glance of enquiry.

"Emulation is coeval with *nature*," said her Ladyship, laying an emphasis on the last word, that she purposed should convey an applicable retort to the rustic Celia.

Celia bowed, though their *definition* of the expression would have been perfectly distinct.

Lady Bab Blindon and Mr. Danbury were announced.

"I am expiring with fatigue," said Lady Bab, throwing herself into a chair.—"Conceive my *courage*—I have walked from Cardonnel's to this."

"How very *imprudent!*" said the Marchioness.—"My dear Blindon, you will spoil your ancles—nothing can be more injurious than such exertion."

Mr. Danbury, after addressing Celia with the *profound* humility of a lover, threw himself into an attitude of *defence*.—Lord Quadrige accepted the challenge, and an *elegant*

elegant specimen of the *pugilistic* art was displayed, for the *amusement* of the ladies.

"Admirable!" said the Marchioness, using her eye-glass;—"what *science!*"

Whether the mischief was *intended*, or that it was *really* accident, we cannot pretend to say, but my Lord, in an unfortunate moment, took an aim *too* near the *cheek* of his antagonist, and, woeful to relate! *one* of the martial *whiskers* of Mr. Danbury fell to the ground.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said the Marchioness.—Lady Townly unguardedly laughed aloud, while Lady Bab, clasping her hands, sat in rueful agitation. Celia, to whom *all* artificial aids, as applied to the person, were highly exceptionable, yet considered the present scene as *one* which must be painful to the demolished beau, owned that compassion inseparable from a good mind.—She turned from the ludicrous confusion of Danbury, who, seizing the fallen remnant of *manly beauty*, retired precipitately.—

Lord

Lord Quadrige endeavoured to look grave. Lady Bab cast an indignant glance at the rude *gladiator*, and turning her back on his Lordship, began a conversation, which she hoped would engage the attention of her auditors.

"What an *enchanting* effect that *dying* lamp had!" said her Ladyship, addressing the Marchioness.

"It was my own *idea*," said the Marchioness.

"Describe it," said Lady Townly.

The flattered fashionable complied.

"The bath in the *interior* apartment is considered a master-piece of architecture, so I contrived a small *lambent* sort of flame, that just made darkness visible, which, when combined with the refreshing coolness of the dripping water, was certainly very unique—it gained *universal* approbation."

"In the inner room I spy a winking lamp, that weakly strokes the ambient air, scarce kindling into light," said Lord

Quadrige,

Quadrige, with an air and attitude truly theatrical.

"Very poetic, inimitably *applicable!*" said the Marchioness.—"What a Proteus you are! When shall we see you fret your hour upon the stage again?"

"*Our* theatre," said my Lord, "has *closed* for *this* season;—the *company* are *strolling* in a *sister* kingdom."

"Your Romeo was the finest piece of acting I ever beheld," said Lady Townly.

"You do me *infinite* honour," said my Lord.—"Yet, assuredly, I may venture to say, that with Miss Delacour as my *Juliet*, I could exceed all my former attempts."

"No inducement could tempt me to an exhibition of the sort," said Celia, smiling.

"She speaks!—Oh! speak again, bright angel," said my Lord.

"Miss Delacour is a very primitive fair one," said Lady Townly, "or I would have persuaded Townly to let us get up a play this season; yet you may remember what a cruel *negative he* put upon my wishes, when

I had

I had studied my *character*, and absolutely made my dress."

"It is probable you *spared* your *character*," thought the unfashionable Celia; yet she ventured no opinion.

"My dear Cinderella," said Lady Bab, in a whisper, to our heroine, "you will be generous, and, like the good *protegée* of the *fairy*, consider your *sister*, and help *her* to an *etablissement.*"

Celia looked her surprise—"I do not comprehend you," said our heroine.

"You are a prude," said her Ladyship. "So you think I do not know that my brother is your slave, nor yet that he has imparted his *tendresse* to Sir Harry."

Celia trusted that the candid manner of her relation had convinced Mr. Danbury that *she* was unworthy of his consideration.

"What *ineffable* humility!" said Lady Bab.

"It is common honesty," said Celia;—and looking towards her sister with an expression of weariness, Lady Townly arose, and

and assuring her dear friend the Marchioness that she should expect her in the evening, she nodded to Lady Bab and Lord Quadrige—"I shall see ye at night—adieu;" and followed by the tired Celia, she sought her carriage.

"That house always puts me out of humour," said her Ladyship; "it is like fairy land.—I will positively go to the North this summer, and *contrive* to fall sick, when, if I can but persuade Harry to *sell* or *mortgage* the old *mansolem*, as I always call it, I might *hope* to make a *dash* next season."

"What a *noble emulation!*" said Celia.—"You cannot be serious, Fanny; and, thank Heaven, Townly will not be so *weak* as to yield to your whims."

"Cruel Celia," said Lady Townly, "you have not a *spark* of emulation in your composition.—A husband! I verily believe your heart is made of adamant—you are absolutely repulsive; and, as my friend the Marchioness observes, *time* is stealing,

Celia—

Celia—you will let the golden moment pass, and *then* what will it matter that you *once* were *young?* Who *cares* for what we *have* been?—not a sentiment that you *utter* bears the *naïvette* of *youth.* You will *regret* it, believe me;—it is a lamentable character to support, to bear the gibes and jeers of every married girl, who blesses her good stars that *she* was *prudent.*"

"It is *my prudence,* or rather my *emulation,*" said Celia.—"I would not *marry* for the *world's* applause; and am *emulous* enough to hope that a *pure conscience* would meet *favour,* where *perjury* has been *emphatically* denounced."

Lady Townly warbled an Italian air;—and, as she descended from the carriage—"Not a word of the whisker," said she.

Celia smiled—and a reflection passed over her mind;—she wondered, if the *defect* had been one of *nature,* instead of *art,* whether her Ladyship would have been so forbearing. But though Lady Townly had asked the *silence* of her sister in this respect,

spect, they had no sooner assembled at dinner, than she recorded the *degrading* tale, with all the well-known *empressement* of her disposition.

Sir Harry and Mr. Belford, though they smiled at the whimsical disaster, were severe in their censure of an adoption so unmanly.

"It is these effeminate follies that degrade the name of *man*," said the Baronet. "The *original character* of an *Englishman* has passed away.

"Such a medley of *acquirements* and *fancies* mix in the *man* of the *present* day, that one blushes to call such creatures *countrymen.*—A gladiator *perfumed,* bewigged, and be*whiskered*;—a *cocher* singing Italian songs, playing Romeo and the *fool* at the same time;—a soldier running *races*; and a *parson* to be found behind the *scenes* at the Opera House;—a *merchant* inventing *classical* designs for *household furniture*;—while the *classical scholar* is *starving* in his *unfurnished garret*;—poets writing *grossierement*

sierement for the *amusement* of the *ladies* —and *noblemen allowing* their *dedication*, to the disgrace of their *morals*, and the certain *dereliction* of real taste, which never *yet* could be *gratified* by the *impurities* of genius."

"Yet we are *told* that the age is greatly improved," replied Belford;—"the *arts* are advanced to a degree unparalleled in this cold region.—This must *undoubtedly* be attributed to the *ladies*, who *now*, unconscious of the *seasons'* difference, think all *penance* to *climate* superfluous."

"The women!—By Heaven, Belford, the women are excusable in all their *fancies*. Where will you find a *man* who would appreciate them for *innate* worth? a *pas seul*, an Italian scena, may elect them to the favour of a modern man: yet I sometimes think, that if they were *true* to *themselves*, it might have a good effect; but I *allow* they have little *encouragement* to make the attempt."

"It were worth the *trial*," said Belford; "for

"for the *universal* vassalage of *man* is such, that they could not *live* their scorn; though I believe it is possible for a very *unfashionable* man to die a *mental* death, under the *caprice* of his *unconscious* tyrant."

The last sentence was addressed *at* Celia, who, with her sister, had risen, and was leaving the dining-room. The cheeks of our heroine were suffused with crimson blushes; while Lady Townly, laying her hand on the shoulder of Mr. Belford, who was holding the door as they retired, declared he was as complex and *eccentric* a *lover*, as Miss Delacour, in *all* her *search*, could possibly hope to meet.

Mr. Belford closed the door; and as he pledged the sparkling beverage to the mistress of his heart—"Would to Heaven *I* dared hope as much!" said he.—What Sir Harry wished, he did not utter, for *his* hopes were by no means sanguine.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"Ye splendid fabrics, palaces, and towers,
Where dissipation leads the giddy hours,
Where pomp, disease, and knavery reside,
And folly bends the knee to wealthy pride,
Where luxury's purveyors learn to rise,
And worth, to want a prey, unfriended dies."

Our heroine had been in a degree initiated into the system which graces an *assembled* party, had heard all the *flattery, hypocrisy,* &c.&c. which is usual in *society;* but the *preparations previous* to their *admittance,* was a scene of which she could form no idea. It is happy for the *uninformed,* when they are permitted to *extend* their knowledge; for, if the thing be *worthy* their adoption, *reason* decides in its favour; and if it be only the perishable *whim* of the day, the mere *dashing, fascinating* gewgew of the moment,

moment, the *rational* creature owns the same *reference,* and rejects the illusive *theory.*

"Theory," says the *paragraphed,* smiling, *distinguished* fashionable, "do we not *practise* all the elegancies, *invent* a thousand luxuries? What do you expect of us?"

Nothing, absolutely nothing, my fair volunteers in the cause of folly, for you are not *qualified* to *please* me; nor do you please *yourselves*—it is all imagination. You *mean* to *astonish,* and you *endeavour* to do so; you make the *attempt,* and are *outdone* in the next hour. Thus you deserve not the name of *practitioners*—you are *quacks, detected* and *exposed* by every aspiring votary, who takes his or her diploma at the hands of *folly, fashion, notoriety,* or any other name by which you choose to distinguish your *disease.*

"Excessively well!" said Lady Townly, as she walked through the apartments; "very unique!—Horrible!" she screamed; "did you ever see anything so odious?"

Celia

Celia knew not where to look—her Ladyship rang the bell—"Send for half a dozen of the men from below," said she. The men hastened to obey her order. "Break that hideous *monotony* in the chairs," said her Ladyship, "it *fatigues* my eye." The men were active in effecting the *confusion* desired, while Celia sat a silent spectatress of the scene. "And those *novelties*," said her Ladyship, "they are placed in *pairs*—how *ridiculous! divorce* them instantly; can any thing be so *unfashionable!*" Celia thought, and she allowed it to be *natural*, that the *men* found it difficult to hide the risibility which the commands of their Lady excited. "That will do," said Lady Townly. The men withdrew. "Heigho!" said this voluntary slave, "why did I hear of that *provoking* lamp?—but it is too late *now*."

"Is it possible that you can give a *thought* to a matter so insignificant?" said Celia.

"Yes, not only possible, but *bona fide*

 the

the case," said her Ladyship; "my eye is painfully correct—I see *defects*, where the vulgar would express strong *admiration*."

"But you never saw this *wonderful* lamp," said Celia; "thus it is your *emulation*, and not your eye, which is offended."

"You are very saucy," said Lady Townly; "it is my *mind's* eye that is wounded, for in *idea* I see that 'streaming light', so eloquently described by the Marchioness."

"There is a *light*, to which you are *wilfully* blind," said our heroine, "I mean reason. For shame, Fanny! shake off this insidious lethargy, nor send me from you *hopeless*, if not *miserable*. Did I not hear you declaim against servile *imitation*, and now you are lamenting that you have not the power to adopt a most *egregious* folly. The *eloquence* of the Marchioness appeared to me the most glaring absurdity I ever witnessed. Nay, forgive me, when I add, that the idea of making a bath conspicuous, appears at once ridiculous and voluptuous; *here*

they

they are more for ornament than use; and in those countries where their use is general, I must believe, (because the idea is soothing to my feelings), that whatever has been *written* to the contrary, a sort of sacredness of modesty is observed, consistent with the delicacy of the sex: it is not because *one* woman has thought proper to make herself *eminently* ridiculous, that *you* should follow her."

"My dear Celia," said Lady Townly, "you talk this matter vastly well, but you cannot convert *me*. If one *lives* in the world, one———" A loud rap interrupted her Ladyship. "What vulgarity!" she continued; "it is scarcely ten o'clock—the Bertons I will vouch."

"I hope so," said Celia, "for I should like to snatch a few minutes of sober conversation."

"Most willingly would *I* resign *my* share of the *treat*," said Lady Townly.—"Ah! my dear friends," she continued, rising, "this is kind—I had not promised

myself so condescending a proof of your favour."

Celia felt uneasy while contemplating the features of her sister—they wore the most conciliating smile—it would have been impossible to detect the finished hypocrisy——and she sighed at the *perfection* of the *deceptious* system.

Sir Peter was remarking on the brilliancy of the rooms, when Sir Harry and Mr. Belford entered.

"We are early visitors," said Lady Berton; "but take into your consideration the simple fact—*this* is our first appearance at an *evening* party for the last fourteen years; and Berton has been teazing me these two hours, with the belief that Celia would have *retired* before we *arrived*."

"Yet you visit London every year," said Lady Townly; "how do you kill your evenings?"

"Our stay is always short," said Sir Peter; "we do not mix so as to gain the *fashionable* way of *murdering* the tyrant, and

and are forced to be content in our *ignorance*, and *use* him. Fanny," continued Sir Peter, "what would Aunt Mansfield think of these apartments? she has excellent *natural* taste, and would do justice to any *invention* that illustrates genius; yet I am not quite certain that *she* would not consider some of these decorations superfluous."

"She would be right," said Sir Harry; "they are truly ridiculous;" and he directed Sir Peter to observe the *novelties* dispersed through the rooms. "Their very name is an offence to common sense—but what will not *amuse* the *grown* children of this age!"

Lady Townly declared, "that though *she* should be *convinced* of their uselessness, they yet *owned* an infinite *value*, in the *reflections* and *moral* sentiments they induced from *some* of her friends."

"Berton, you deserve this," said Lady Berton; "Fanny is correcting your impertinent criticisms."

"They

"They delight me," said Lady Townly; "I would not glide down the stream *unnoticed*, for the world."

Sir Harry sighed, but made no reply.

The arrival of Lady Cardonnel, Lady Bab Blindon, and Mr. Danbury, changed the subject and the scene. The latter, whiskered *à la Russe*, seemed to have forgotten his *recent* humiliation.

Celia wondered at the *effrontery* of the buck, whose marked attention, as directed to herself, was particularly unpleasing.

As the circle encreased, our heroine contrived to get a seat next Lady Berton —"Come to me to-morrow," said her Ladyship, "we are going to George's box—he has promised to give us some delicious fruit."

Celia assented—it was impossible to refuse so simple a request, and the pleasure she always owned in the society of her old friends, was superior to all other of her London enjoyments.

Lady Berton had strolled with Celia through

through the rooms, when Mr. Berton advanced—"I am deputed to deliver *this* to you," said he, holding a letter in his hand.

"For me?" said Celia.

"I give it *unwillingly*," said Berton, with an air of gallantry; "for, perhaps, it is what I ought to *expect*, but have not the courage to *bear*."

"You are a *faithful* messenger," said Celia, smiling, holding her hand for the letter.

Berton glanced over the superscription—"God of Heaven!" said he, and recovering himself suddenly, he added—"it is impossible!" and presenting the letter, he regarded Celia attentively.

Our heroine, who, in the instant of Berton's exclamation, had combined the probability of its being the expected epistle from Jessy, and that *he* was *her* destroyer, stood irresolute.

"How came *this* into *your* hands?" said Celia, as she discovered that it *was* from the wretched girl.

"Richard asked me to convey it to you," replied Berton; "he said that Lady Townly would not permit *him* to appear up stairs *to-night*—and added, that he had been endeavouring to get one of the servants to take charge of it, but they were so busy they could not attend to *him*."

Celia put the unopened letter into her pocket, and was chatting with Lady Berton, when the Marchioness and Lord Quadrige joined them.

"How admirably Danbury *bears* the late *découvrir!*—he has *infinite addressé*," said her Ladyship.

"Nothing but a *Lethean* draught could do away the *impression*," said Celia, smiling.

"How *immensely* cruel!" said the Marchioness; "you must not be so severe. Consider, my dear Madam, the thing is usual, and really, I must say, the *effect* is very *becoming*."

Lord Quadrige, who was really a handsome manly figure, and *proportionably* vain, smiled graciously on Celia.

"Oh,

"Oh, there is Desmond!" said the Marchioness; "now for 'Much ado about Nothing.' Let us *cut* her. Quadrige, look over her head," and the Marchioness laughed loud, addressed a thousand questions to her party, and *answered* them *herself*. Lady Berton was amused by the scene. "Introduce me to your papa and mama," continued her voluble Ladyship, tapping Berton on the shoulder; "I will give their *rustic principles* such a shock, by the aid of a little *badinage*, that shall induce a moral lecture for the *edification* of the company."

Berton, amidst all his errors, retained the most perfect veneration for his parents. Celia blushed, while Lady Berton, who leaned on her arm, by a gentle pressure, forbade her to convince her Ladyship of her exact situation.

"Lead me to them," continued the Marchioness.

"Excuse me," said Berton, "they would detect your intention; I——"

"What an impertinent! Well, positively,

ly, I know you fear me. Which is Sir Peter Berton?" said the Marchioness, attacking Belford and Sir Peter, who crossed their path.

"Sir Peter Berton, at your service," said Belford, introducing the Baronet.

The Marchioness blushed—"I am most excessively honoured," curtsying; "it is a happiness for which I have long sighed," said her Ladyship; "but these young men, my good Sir, have an immense dislike to their *town* friends meeting their *rural* relatives—it is a sort of error, into which the hilarity of youth could *alone* lead them, for surely nothing *ought* to be more *soothing* to the idlers of this giddy metropolis, than that they have a solace in *reserve*, to which their *inexperience* may resort, whenever *Reason* usurps her power."

"Their affection may and should be gratified, by a reflection so essential to a *good* mind," said Sir Peter, bowing with cool respect; "but, unless they carry in their *bosoms* a guard against deception,

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and a just *sense* of the *value* to be placed upon *all* that this town *can* bestow, their *country cousins,* like their *offended Supernal Judge,* will consider their offering as of little worth."

"Infinitely just, *as* much like an aspiring *curé,* in the hearing of a bishop, as any thing can possibly be," said her Ladyship, dragging her party onwards.

"Now for the mama—*they* are the trembling sensitive plants in these cases."

"I will answer for the mother in question," said Berton, with animation. "See how exactly you have guessed the truth —*this* is my mother," and he introduced the Marchioness.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* what a cruel dilemma!"

"Take comfort, Madam," said Lady Berton; "your Ladyship will no doubt find a *reserve,* and for *myself,* I avow I am not *without one.*"

"How eminently lenient!" said the Marchioness; "yet really, if you understood my character, you would discover that it

is

is the delight I have in lowering these young men, whose vanities are so insufferable, that it is absolutely necessary we should lash them sometimes."

"The motive is *excellent*," said Lady Berton; "and for the *effect*, *I* shall ever remain a believer in your Ladyship's *talent* for *badinage*."

"You are very good," said the Marchioness, who, seeing Lady Cardonnel in earnest conversation with Bridoon, recollecting that she had a matter of moment to impart, gladly left her *tired* companions.

Berton felt as though he could have resigned the smiles of that world which he *had* been so sedulous to please, have resigned it *for ever*, and in the virtuous circle at Hadley, learned to estimate life, by employing it rationally; that he did *not* blend a system perfectly consonant with a heart in love, we would not pretend to say; and *perhaps* its impracticability made it *more* the object of his consideration.

"I am very angry with *you*," said Lady Bab

Bab Blindon, addressing Celia; "you are an ungrateful creature—not a moment of this evening has been given to me—it is immensely cruel, considering our projected *relationship.*" Celia looked grave. "Nay, do not blush so childishly," continued Lady Bab; "all the town knows it—I pity you, Quadrige, but *disappointment* is the lot of mortals;" and with a sarcastic shrug, she quitted that friend whose society she had appeared to seek.

"And it is yours, and all those who think with you on *this* subject," thought Celia; yet she was not so uninformed in the *motives* of the fashionable Lady Bab, as not to perceive that it was done to make her conspicuous, and give strength to the pretensions of Danbury.

"Though you will not be *my* daughter," said Lady Berton, as she drew Celia on one side previous to her departure, "I am persuaded you will make no decision without consulting your good aunt."

"Never, my dear Madam," said Celia; "the

"the world is strangely disposed to speak of me—why, I cannot discover; but assuredly nothing can be further from my thoughts, than *any engagement* of the sort to which they allude."

"I thought so, my dear girl," said her Ladyship; "I must ever regret that our happiness is diminished, by your refusal of our erring yet not *incorrigible* boy; but assured as I am, that *principle* actuates every feeling of your mind, we do justice to your candour. Adieu," continued her Ladyship, "I shall expect you in the morning."

Celia promised to be punctual. "If my sister asks for me," said Celia to Mr. Belford, who had attended Lady Berton to her carriage, "whisper that I have retired for the night."

"Give one moment to me," said Belford; "I heard Lady Berton compliment you on your *candour;* extend it, and tell me how *I* have fallen under your displeasure."

"My *displeasure!*" said Celia, smiling, "what a term!"

"Be generous," said Belford; "I deserve it at your hands."

"My head achs," said Celia; "yet I will not recede from your enquiry, when I can with *propriety* reply to you; will that satisfy you?"

"It must," said Belford, "for I must believe you. God bless you, good-night!" and pressing her hand, with an impressive yet respectful manner, he waited only to obey the commands of his beloved Celia, and retired.

Our heroine drew the letter of Jessy from her pocket; her expectation was high, because her feelings were strongly interested in the fate of the sufferer; and the manner of Belford, so void of levity, so incapable of a conduct so flagrant, made her anxious to have her doubts removed. She broke the seal, but great was her disappointment, when only the few lines following met her eye:—

"Dear Madam,

"All my purposes are defeated; my cough has occasioned so great a weakness in my side, that I cannot bear the fatigue of writing; if I am better tomorrow, I have much to say, and am only anxious to assure you, that I am grateful for your kindness to the wretched

"Jessy."

"That sweet boy!" said Celia, as she gazed on the waved lines; "poor Jessy! yes, she is evidently dropping into the grave—why should not I go to her, and comfort her, assure her of my firm intent with regard to her child? she has avowed she is unfortunate, and *abandoned* by her seducer." The *world* rose on the imagination of Celia—"The world," said Celia, thought-

thoughtfully—" the impertinent *cheat!*—Does not *Lady Milner* meet countenance from those who *call* themselves virtuous? —and *she* left an honourable husband, and an innocent family, and without a blush, mixes in society, as if a *new* name could *regenerate* her conscious error. Did I not see the *husband* of that shameless woman beaming on his intelligent countenance all the care, the *sorrow*, the sensibility, that should mark the *penitent* instead of the *injured?* I *will* see you, Jessy, not to-morrow morning, but in the evening—I will steal an hour, and visit your deserted abode, though a thousand fingers should be pointed at me—I feel I cannot be wrong in doing so, and I *believe* I have the power to give you *some* comfort."—With these feelings the benevolent Celia retired, Charity soothing her slumbers, by *perfecting* her hopes in the fair vision of a dream.

As our heroine at breakfast, next morning, made known her promise to Lady

 Berton,

Berton, her sister declared herself disposed to join the party *sans ceremonie.*—"There is nothing I enjoy so much as a *dejeune*—and there was such a palpable meanness in Lady Berton's being so sly, that I am half tempted to do my utmost to vex her."

Celia explained; she believed it was not to be a party—she was assured it was not. Lady Berton had merely asked her, because she knew that she liked to get out of the air of London as much as possible.

"Ah, now I recollect it is at Highgate," said her Ladyship; "I recant--positively I could not support the idea. Celia, you will have immense *amusement*—it is quite a *London* village—*citizens'* country-*houses,* no bigger than an egg-shell—monstrous verandas, enveloping the whole *fronts* of the *mansions*—*flowers,* placed in regular rows, like their *ribbons* and *pins* in their *shops* in town—and you will see the loaded stages, conveying the live lumber to breathe *fresh air,* that is daily impregnated with the *fumes* of *tobacco* whiffed from

from their *contemplative* pipes during their evening *reflections al fresco.*"

"There is an independence in their enjoyments," said Celia, "even admitting them to be exactly what you say, that places them *above* their superiors. In fashionable life there is not the most remote semblance of this boasted *prerogative* of the *English* character; they are slaves, asses, discontented, envious beings, applauding with *one* breath, and censuring in the next; and the hypocrisy, Fanny—I blush to reflect on *all* I have heard. Fashion, beyond a doubt, *blinds* her votaries, but unless she makes them *deaf* at the same time, they are the meanest *class* of beings under Heaven; for nothing can be more obvious, than that they smile in your face, and *traduce* you at the same moment."

"You are a dear truth-telling good girl," said Lady Townly; "but, Celia, you will never be a *happy* woman—that microscopic eye of yours is an enemy to content—you will not see things as they *are*—

 what

what you will be twenty years hence, I cannot conceive; and actually, as your 'search after a husband' appears to me hopeless, (because your fastidiousness disgusts the men worthy to be distinguished), I am anticipating that *awful* period, when, with your spectacles on your nose, and your voice changed to the owl-like shriek of antiquated maidenism, you shall be lecturing the poor damsels of that day, with the *immorality* of the *men*, and the *astonishing* indelicacy of the women."

"I need not wait *that* term to make my strictures *applicable*," said Celia; "the *present* times would afford *ample* topic for animadversion, but *I* am not so arrogant, I trust."

"What do you mean to do with your money?" said Lady Townly; "I really think it would be provident in me to court your favour, and get you to make your *will* in *Rachel's* behalf."

"She may very probably be my representative," said Celia; "at all events, it shall

shall never be *given* for the purchase of a *mail-coach*, though made on the most superb model, nor yet to buy *whiskers* for any Englishman, who wishes to *look* like a *bear*; it shall never *encrease* the *brutality* of a pugilist, nor *improve* the *false* taste of an *imaginary* connoisseur. I would give it *unhesitatingly* to the man I loved, but the man *I* could love would not *condescend* to be my debtor."

"Love in a cottage!" said Lady Townly, laughing; "yes, my dear girl, Fate has made a *gentlewoman* of a very good sort of housewife, who would have owned more happiness in a dairy than the most *splendid* dome could bestow."

"You will not understand my feelings," said Celia, smiling; "yet I wish you did, for I think you would love me better."

"Forgive me," said Lady Townly, as she perceived the tears that stood in the eyes of our heroine; "I would not distress you for worlds, believe me, Celia—it is my affection that leads me to this *gaité*—

I wish

I wish to see you filling *that* rank in society, which your person and fortune may claim—I see *all* the young women seizing the golden moment, and I almost *despair* of your settling—it is a *serious* thing in London; and my *vanity* is wounded, for I had really hoped to see you fired with a *noble* emulation, instead of which you are imperiously indifferent to advances, which would be seized with *appropriate gratitude* by thousands; it will *all* be laid to *me*—either *I* have no *influence* in *society*, or your *extreme rusticity* will be the *imputed* causes. Consider how mortifying this will be."

"I will abridge *your* uneasiness, and the *impertinence* of a world, for which I entertain the most sovereign contempt, by retiring to Hadley.—I have already exceeded the proposed term of my visit," said Celia; "my aunt, from affection to you, has not pressed my return, yet I know she wishes for me."

"Not

"Not yet, Celia—no, positively you shall not go till the autumn."

Celia held no altercation, yet she resolved on acting for herself; and soon after taking leave of her sister, she proceeded to Lady Berton's.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"'Tis heaven-born Charity, benignant guest!
She comes, *the mourner's drooping soul to cheer,*
And gently wipe away the orphan's tear.

* * * * *

"I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry 'tis all barren; and so it is, and so is all the *world* to him who will not cultivate the sweets of it."

Now Celia, though wholly void of *affected* sentiment, saw beauties, where a common observer would have found little to admire. In her ride to Highgate, the snug retreats of those persons, whom her sister had ridiculed, were to *her* objects of grateful contemplation. "It speaks the happiness of a free constitution," thought Celia; "their enjoyment is proportionably more perfect, as it is drawn from their own in-

dustry.

dustry. Nor should their *taste* be decryed —the taste of the higher circles, as drawn from *antiquity*, and adopted without *reflection*, offers an assemblage to the eye by no means perfect."—Thus the villas of the citizens were to the unfashioned Celia, structures more worthy of respect than the most *classical* mansions that the 'usage of society' had distinguished.

"George will meet an agreeable surprise in *your* visit," said Lady Berton, as they approached the dwelling of Mr. Berton; "I did not apprize him of it, though, in truth, my dear Celia, our son is much changed; that flow of spirits, which used to grace his manner, and gratify our loves, (from the conviction that cheerfulness is the handmaid of virtue), is sadly diminished."

Sir Peter looked thoughtful—"That sentiment is conclusive," said he; "I fear George has forfeited *his* internal peace, and it is beyond the power of this delusive world

world to give a lasting sunshine, where no *virtual* feeling *aids* the lulling anodyne."

"We must be lenient, my dear Berton," said her Ladyship; "I dare not think with you. Ah, there he is!" continued the fond mother, "he is looking out for us."

The carriage stopped at a small, but elegant villa, furnished according to the *French* manner—muslin shades, through which the jonquil draperies were visible.

"How good!" said Berton, as he discovered our heroine in the carriage; "I did not hope so much, nor ought I to have wished it *here*," he added, in a low voice, and pausing in the little court, which bloomed in front of the house.

Celia looked towards her companion; he seemed on the point of saying more; but again taking the hand of our heroine, he led her into the cottage.

"This is exactly the *retirement* of a *fashionable* man," said Sir Peter, regarding the apartments attentively; "all the new-

ness

ness of *style*, and the luxury of foreign importations; yet I admit that the *tout ensemble* is pleasing to the eye."

Lady Berton was profuse in her admiration of the decorations—"There is an air of coolness, of simplicity, throughout the whole, that really pleases me," said her Ladyship; "it looks as though a *female* hand had given the finishing touches to the scene."

Mr. Berton coloured, and the nectarine he was presenting to Celia fell from the plate.

"The facility with which houses are fitted now, my dear mother," said George, "is not more extraordinary than the minuteness they observe in every particular which relates to comfort. It is an advancement we have made from our intercourse with the French; and though I perceive my father is laughing at me, I cannot forbear adding, that I am decidedly in favour of all introductions in matters of *taste*, more especially

especially where our *ease* is so considerably improved."

Sir Peter gave full credence to the assertion of his son, yet, with persuasive irony, descanted on the consequences of placing *too* much to the account of ease.

The party strolled in the grounds, where Celia owned infinite delight; the plants were in exquisite order: and here again one might have imagined a *female* hand had been employed, for the flowers were blended, not only with taste, but sentiment. Our heroine regarded them with unusual interest—the nursery-grounds rose on her imagination, and the *fading* Jessy wrung a sigh from her bosom. She had taken a seat by Lady Berton, in a small recess, at the end of the garden, when a servant approached Mr. Berton, and announced a visitor—and in the next moment Mr. Belford appeared. He started on perceiving the ladies, and, without speaking, drew Berton on one side; they seemed in ear-

nest conversation. Berton raised his hand to his forehead—he looked irresolute.

"*Can* you hesitate?" said Belford. A look of scorn was directed towards Mr. Berton, as he left him to his reflections, and joined the ladies.

Lady Berton arose—she saw an agitation in the manner of her son that alarmed her—"You have brought bad news to George, I fear," said she, and she fled to seek the cause. She took his hand—her eyes were tenderly fixed on his countenance, while her feelings, though silent, might have been appropriately illustrated by the immortal Homer.

> "Why grieves my son? Thy anguish let me share,
> Reveal the cause, and trust a parent's care."

"I must leave you directly," said Berton; "I have an affair of moment to adjust. Make an apology to Celia—no, I will speak to her myself," he added; and advancing to the arbour, he was expressing his regrets at the necessity he was un-

der of quitting them, when Celia, in raising her eyes to reply, saw the name of Jessy, written with a pencil on the trellis-work, and beneath that the lines subjoined—

"Thus, for your sake, I shun each human eye;
I bid the sweets of blooming youth adieu;
To die I languish, but I dread to die,
Lest my sad fate should nourish pangs for you."

An ashy paleness stole over the features of our heroine—conviction flashed on her mind—she was incapable of speech—Berton glanced towards the spot on which her eye had rested—the damning proof was before him, and, without attempting utterance, he fled precipitately. Lady Berton, with Sir Peter, were conversing at some distance. Mr. Belford, who was seated by Celia, looked embarrassed—he was too liberal to breathe a sentence that could depreciate the evidently-erring Berton, while the *effect* the *discovery* had made in the sen-

sitive

sitive mind of Celia alarmed his love, and at the same time disappointed his discernment.

"Was Berton, until this moment, the beloved of Celia?" thought the despairing Belford; "I would rather have believed, that her sense of *virtue* alone influences her present feelings."

"Mr. Belford," said Celia, extending her hand, "I have been in error; I have dishonoured your principles; the mistake took rise in such specious appearances, as would greatly *justify* my mistake. You will accept this explanation, and believe me when I say, I rejoice that I am thus undeceived."

"Most generous and amiable of women!" said Belford; "yet your *clemency* is dangerous. Forgive me, Celia; I could ask more of you—say, if the man whom your delicacy is pleased to approve, whom your candour has reinstated where he is most anxious to make himself acceptable,

tell me, if you could bestow a heart on that man?"

"I believe that I ought to wish I could do so," said Celia, with impressive sweetness: "you have heard me termed insensible—you will unite in the sentiment, when I declare, that to consider you as a *friend* will ever be most gratifying to my feelings, but that I am unworthy of a more flattering distinction."

"Enough," said Belford, relinquishing the hand he had detained; "you are above the little art of giving pain; may you meet a heart as worthy of you, as devoted to your unaffected character, as he who, while he adores your candour, for *your* sake will live and die a lover!"

Celia attempted to reprove the fond despondency of her friend.

"It is my pride," said Belford; "men of *my* age are either the victims of *personal* charms, or eminently miserable, from the *perfection* of their adoration. Mine

must

must be of this sort; yet I would nor forego the delight of seeing you; I do not esteem you as a handsome woman, as one who, in accepting my hand, would make me the envy of my own sex. However flattered I might be, I should be, by your love, the simplicity of your character would be the unrivalled grace, the lasting charm, which made me your slave—may you meet one who will prize you for this! Should you do so, even I, yes I, Celia, would endeavour at beholding you the wife of another."

Celia, at this moment, arraigned her own discernment—"Is not this the very preference that my heart has ever imagined as the foundation of *lasting* love? I can abstract from the language of a lover that *superlative* mode of *expression*, with which even *sincerity* may embellish the distinction. Then why am I thus *indifferent* to the *honourable* passion of Belford?" said Celia, mentally. "I am an *imaginary* artist;" sighed Celia; "the portrait lives in my *fancy*—I must *erase* the vivid shade,

 for,

for, alas! the colouring is not in *nature* —and what am *I*, who thus *dare* to expect in a husband the realised vision of a *romantic* heart!" Again the pencilled lines in the trellis met her eye, and the form of Jessy flitted before her mental perception—"Here has *she* mourned the broken promises of man, and she *dies* the victim of his arts." Her purposed visit to the frail sufferer was, if possible, doubled in its interest, for she believed that Berton's *known* assiduities to herself had been the deep *source* of Jessy's recent sorrow.— "May this," thought Celia, "be the *extent* of that visitation with which thy moral error may be chastened!" Alas! to fall from *virtue* is a grievous failing; but she

"Who steeps the conscious error with her tears,

who humbles herself, and is *single* in her *crime, conscience is* to such a one a *propitiation* and a *punishment*.

The Baronet and his amiable partner, though disappointed by the departure of their

their son, were too fondly attached to him, to account for it in a way at all applicable to the real state of things; yet that tenacious foresight, congenial to parental feelings, impressed them with a dread of *something* undivulged, some *reservation*, which their tenderness and uniform leniency made them justly consider their due.

Sir Peter, after ordering the carriage, drew Belford on one side, and, with unaffected solicitude, besought him to explain the cause of George's sudden departure. "Was it business, my dear Belford?" said Sir Peter.

Belford declared *he* believed it to be so —"in fact, I am assured it is," said Belford; "I consider it to be the adjustment of a *will*, which has been delayed for some time, and it happened that *I* was so fortunate as to know that George would *regret* his omission; and having a call to make at his chambers, I undertook to seek him; not finding him there, and considering the matter urgent, I followed hither. But I

 believe

believe I should not have been so zealous, had I known you would have felt this *temporary* deprivation so seriously."

The Baronet was appeased; but Lady Berton, whose intelligent eyes followed Belford with an anxious penetration, could neither raise her spirits, or dismiss the idea, that he was endeavouring to deceive them.

How many, and simple, are the disappointments which fall in our path! how useless are all *our* dispositions of the *time* to come! *Man* plans, and *Heaven erases* the *fabric* of his *imagination*. We purpose to be happy to-morrow; *to-morrow* comes, and some unexpected *casualty* defeats our bliss: yet it is the *obscurity* of our fate that gives us even the *shadow* of happiness. "Who talks of Providence, of a directing fate, when speaking of the *common* purposes of life?" says the light-thinking creature of the day; "is it not *degrading* the *Deity*, to take *him* into our thoughts in the midst of our pleasure?—does he preside

side over our thoughtless hours?—can we, ought we to expect his presence in our every pursuit?" I answer yes—for *where* is he *not?* "In the midst of life, we are in death."

> "Death stalks behind thee, and each flying hour
> Does some loose remnant of thy life devour:"

and he who has "numbered the stars," who considers "the lily of the field," the *inanimate* bounties of his hand, will *he* forsake the endowed image of *himself?*—the *creature,* born with *reason,* and consequently capable of reflection? It is the *heresy* of reason to reject so *soothing* a belief—it is the scepticism of an irreligious *soul,* that, wilfully *blind* to the *present,* leaves *all* to the *reckoning* of a *distant* day.

With distinct yet equally oppressed feelings, our little party returned to town; that tranquil pleasure for which they had made the journey, had been destroyed—the *disappointment* was trivial in *itself,* but the *cause* was variously translated by each.

Celia

Celia quitted her friends with a tender reluctance; she saw them uneasy, and possessing in her own bosom a fatal *knowledge* of what *they* only *surmised*, she in idea looked to that period, when their *parental* bosoms would be distended, by the conviction that their hopes in their only child were not only too sanguine, but altogether ill-founded.

On entering the drawing-room of Lady Townly, Celia found her sister surrounded by visitors—"My dear girl," said her Ladyship, "you look quite funereal; what has Sir Peter been saying? Come, tell us all—who was there?"

"Mr. Berton was called away," said Celia; "we had no party—Mr. Belford joined us."

"Happy Berton!" said Lord Quadrige, taking a seat by Celia; "his presence must, indeed, be of value to Miss Delacour, if his *departure* causes so visible a dejection."

Celia attempted to refute the charge, but

but in vain; for Lady Townly, and her echo, Lady Cardonnel, took up the subject, and, according to the "usage of society," quizzed her with persevering effrontery.

"She is a very fine girl," said Sir Robert Vat, in a whisper to Lady Townly —"How long has she been in town?"

Her Ladyship replied; and Sir Robert continued eyeing her through his glass with fashionable ease.

"What a famous hit I got this morning!" said Sir Robert; "I was in the stable, giving directions to my *valet d'écurie*, when a Jew popped his nose in at the door. I saw he looked knowing—so, stepping on one side, I threw off my coat, and began rubbing away at the harness. 'Vat you vant?' says I, addressing the Israelite.

'I put you up to a good ting,' says he.

"I fell into the snare instantly, and Moses, looking sagacious, produced a small box, containing a number of gold pieces.

'De bucks have sported *half-crowns* and

and *shillings*, but not *one* has tought of *gold buttons* like dese; dey are de doubloon; vat you tink—get your *buck* to buy dese, and I will give you profit.'

"I offered to examine the box, but he fought shy.

'I will not trust them out of my hands,' said Moses.'

'My master is a prince in his pay,' says I.

'Dat is de *worst* ting you could say,' said Moses; 'no, you tell dat honest Jew has de *bargain*, and he will be caught.'

"I threw one of the traces over the head of Moses, and entangling him in *my* snare, I avowed myself; for a moment, he was overcome by surprise, but recovering himself, he *threw* off, and I discovered he was *scientific*—we *sparred* for ten minutes—he shewed infinite *skill*, and I now learned that he was a pupil of Mendoza's."

"Excellent!" said Lady Cardonnel and Lady Townly in a breath; "what a fund of whimsicality you possess!"

Lord

Lord Quadrige declared "it was an admirable hoax!"

Celia was silent—it was to her a new *trait* of *fashionable* manners, but that it was in the least *applicable* or *essential* to a *gentleman, she* could not admit.

Sir Harry entered, and, after listening to a repetition of the *elegant* anecdote, he took a seat by our heroine—"Could *you* give up the *search,* and pause *here?*" said Sir Harry, smiling.

Celia, in a low voice, declared "it was an additional stumbling-block in the path of *her* preferment."

"You were speaking of *blocks,*" said Lady Cardonnel, turning to Celia; "how do you like the *Cavendish* scratch?"

Celia begged an explanation.

"How imperiously indifferent you would *seem,*" continued her Ladyship, "as if you had not *discovered* the *alteration* in the *têtes* of the men."

Celia looked as though a *total* change in this now *desolate departêment* of the *mas-*

culine

culine structure was an alteration "devoutly to be wished."

"Then you do not perceive," resumed her Ladyship, "that the Roman *contour* is dismissed, and the *hair* now descends below the neck—*I* think it excessively becoming, and vastly *youthful*."

Celia replied by a bow—she had nothing to *say* on this *important* subject.

A servant announced Colonel Aubrey, and a venerable-looking soldier-like man, evidently infirm, entered the room. The *bucks* kept their seats. Sir Harry arose to meet his friend, while Lady Townly made a long face on one side, and as instantaneously smiled on the veteran Aubrey, and with one of her overwrought compliments, expressed her pleasure at seeing him.

The Colonel was lively and entertaining—he checked the giddy sallies of Lady Townly with pleasant irony—"I must be fashionable in a degree," said Aubrey, placing his spectacles on his nose, "for that

that young lady is a stranger to me; yet I think I trace a likeness to Fanny Delacour." Sir Harry introduced our heroine. "Yes, just such a woman do I remember Lady Townly," resumed Aubrey. "Do you like London, Madam?" and he made an effort to cross the room, in order to take a seat near Celia. His footsteps failed—our heroine and Sir Harry ran to his assistance, and had seated him, with that respectful assiduity, so applicable, so soothing to the aged, ere the Colonel had the power of thanking them.

The little group looked on—a titter seemed to pervade the countenances of the leagued fashionables; while Celia, unmindful of her situation, wholly overpowered by the feelings that filled her bosom, exclaimed—

"'Twas impious then, so much was age revered,
For youth to keep his seat, when an old man appear'd."

No sooner had she closed the couplet, than

than the blushes that stained her cheek spoke the timid shame of a retired mind.

Lord Quadrige started from his seat—"What enunciation!" said he; "how mellifluous! Siddons is not more flexible! By Heaven, you were born for tragedy!"

"Not for *mock* heroics," said the Colonel, taking the hand of Celia respectfully; "time was, my dear young Lady, when, with the gallantry of a soldier, I would have thanked you for this *genuine* sensibility; but though war, and our mutual enemy, *Time*, has weakened this bending frame, it is possible that my gratitude is worthy your acceptance, for it is unfeigned and appropriate."

Celia endeavoured, by an attention such as the age and prepossessing manners of her new acquaintance demanded, to prove at once the value she attached to his sentiments, and her own humility; she was ashamed at having betrayed so much resentment towards men who were *compara-*

tive

tive strangers; yet to *witness* a total disrespect towards a man like Colonel Aubrey, to see those touching claims to our care, our tenderness for *age*, to the unsophisticated mind of our heroine, was not only the passport to esteem, but the *mirror* for our contemplation; to see this, and be silent, was to acquiesce, where it would be derogatory to be classed.

"A good quotation has an excellent effect," said Sir Robert Vat; "my memory is treacherous—pray, Madam, may I ask your author?"

Celia apologized—she allowed that her feelings had led her astray, and she trusted the gentleman would impute her unguarded manner to the impulse of the moment.

"Miss Delacour was referring you to your *school* studies," said Colonel Aubrey, "an epoch obliterated from the recollection of a *modern* man. It is Juvenal who illustrates this *nobly* tender sentence; but the traces of the *academic* college are now subjugated in that of the *veterinary* the-

atre—*bridles*, bits, and *territs*, give place to *intellectual* resources; and in the *men* of the present day, we meet anything but the man of *letters*."

Lord Quadrige adduced a list of names, as refutations of the satire—" Our poetry, our plays, our periodical publications," said my Lord, " are not the *latter* the very *phillipics* which must gratify those sage moralists, whose *prejudices* for times *past* make them look on the *illuminations* of this age with a jaundiced eye?"

" Our *illuminations* are confined to that light which the introduction of *Grecian lamps* has bestowed," said the Colonel. " Of our poetry, with a *few* exceptions, *I* would not speak in the presence of *ladies*. The drama has miserably fallen—as proof of which, a *modern* play is not *printed* immediately, lest, being *read*, it should damp the *ardour* of public curiosity, and thus deprive the *author* of his nine nights. Yet I know not that *this* should be termed a proof of bad writing, or whether it is

not

not a just conception of the *present* taste of the *English,* which is childishly prone to *follow* and admire whatever is new and ambiguous."

"Pardon me, my dear Sir," said Lady Cardonnel; "but, really, if we were to disregard all that is done for our *amusement,* should we not sink into that rough, unpolished state, that barbarism once attached to the English character? Have we not advanced in feminine graces?—reflect on the reign of Elizabeth, the beef-steak breakfasts, the coarse language of that rude age."

"It was nevertheless an intellectual period," said the Colonel; "nor are the instances adduced by your Ladyship of sufficient weight to stamp the character of those times. I grant that the personal graces of the women are more *feminine* than formerly; yet their *beauties* are by no means so *natural;* it is rather the imbecility than the *worth* of the sex that is now appreciated; and, though you shudder at the

the idea of an old English *breakfast*, the *dejeune* of *this* day, followed by a *dinner* devised by *luxury*, and devoured with epicurean *goût*, and not unfrequently succeeded by a three o'clock *supper*, I repeat, these *frequent* meals evince, that the ladies are by no means so *delicate* as they would *wish* to be considered."

Lady Townly defended the sex—she believed that the sustenance of a *whole day* was not equal to *one* meal of that period to which the Colonel alluded.

"What a famous *scramble* we had at the Argyle rooms the last night!" said Sir Robert Vat; "I made a neat *manœuvre*, and succeeded in getting my party to the best table."

"I never eat suppers," said Lord Quadrige, "but I like to look on; it is highly amusing to see the country gentry swallowing their *surprise* and their supper at the same time, for curse me if I believe they know what they are eating."

"It is an ignorance not confined to any sort

sort of people," said Colonel Aubrey, "for the variety introduced at modern tables requires a diurnal translation."

"I know no house in which one dines so much at ease as Bandana's," said Sir Robert; "he has a bill of fare placed to every visitor—it is worthy of imitation—there is something vastly unique in the idea."

The Colonel and Sir Harry smiled—"Speaking of times past," said the latter, "it has often occurred to me, while contrasting characters, that there was something godlike in the men of those days: we may blame the impetuosity of an *Essex*, yet his valour and his misfortunes balance the irritable qualities of his disposition. The manly *effusions* of a *Sidney* evince that poetry is most delightful, when flowing from a *virtuous* mind. The wary policy of a *Leicester* is not unworthy of remembrance—in fact, numbers could be selected from the tombs, who might call

 a blush

a blush upon our cheeks. Would to Heaven it could excite emulation!"

"Yet *this* period is not destitute of ambition," said Lord Quadrige; "my dear Townly, *you* abstract yourself from that sphere in which the qualities of your sex emanate; your library is your *sanctum sanctorum*, and you prose over the ancients, till their musty maxims deranges your social feelings, and you enter into society like a cynical misanthrope."

"Exactly so," said Lady Townly; "you have pourtrayed Townly admirably, and he deceives himself, for he is *naturally* a social creature."

"But not a dissipated one," said Colonel Aubrey; "the distinction is clear, though rarely made. I smile to hear Quadrige speak of emulation," continued Aubrey, addressing the Peer; "I knew his father, fought by his side, and was once so happy as to save him from a personal danger. Could *my* services be of avail to *his* repre-

representative, it might be in saving him from breaking his neck, as a rival *coach-man*, or being his *bottle-holder* at a prize-fight. Are these the *qualities* that should attach to a title, such as you own? Forgive me, my Lord; but when I meet the sons of men, whose names *yet* live in the memory of their country, when I see young and active men wasting their lives in pursuits, not only *useless* but *degrading*, I blush for my country—I anticipate an awful termination of that glorious constitution, which, supported by her *benefited* family, would stand the test of time, and laugh her *puerile* enemies to scorn. The true end of life is,

———————"Still to employ
The mind's brave ardour in heroic aims,
Such as may raise us o'er the grovelling herd,
And make us shine for ever, that is life."

"These are the *embers* of a martial flame," said my Lord, smiling. "I admire,

 I estimate

I estimate the zeal of a veteran such as Colonel Aubrey," bowing to the animated soldier; "but, my dear Sir, we cannot all be soldiers—and I fear, that the unlucky damp, just thrown on *patronage* and *preferment,* will tend rather to fill the *civil* list, than swell the number of English volunteers."

"I'm gone," said the Colonel, rising; "willing as I am to bow to *female* influence," and he glanced towards Celia, with an air of lively gallantry, "I feel all the pride of age, when I reflect that *my* commission is antediluvian," and followed by Sir Harry he withdrew.

"What a charming old man!" said Celia, as the door closed.

"He is most insufferably grotesque," said Lady Cardonnel; "if I had not feared that he would draw me into an argument that must have *lengthened* his visit, I should have had immense enjoyment in quizzing him."

"You

"You were wise in avoiding it," said Celia, "for I think he would have obliged you to ret eat."

"Miss Delacour is amiably condescending," said the Peer; "but, my dear Madam, if you persevere in standing forth as the champion of age, you will lose the homage of the young."

Celia was silent—yet Lady Townly, who read her thoughts, translated the intelligent smile on the features of her sister, as expressing a belief that she would be no *loser* in that case.

The party dropped off, and Celia, whose mind was intent on her evening visit, withdrew, to consider on the line she was to adopt.

It is not sufficient that we know what is right, but that we also *practise* what we know. Thus our heroine, though fixed in her purpose, was embarrassed as to the mode in which she should prosecute it —she could not make her sister a party in her feelings, for she would neither enter

into her sentiments, or unite in its necessity—to ask the use of the carriage was to avow some project. After some consideration, Celia resolved on making Patty her companion, and determining to seek the gardener, and learn the address of Jessy, with which she was as yet unacquainted; she relied on the *purity* of her intentions, and trusted the *appearances*, which any chance of discovery might elicit, would not injure her with those whom she valued. As Celia quitted the dining-parlour, she avowed herself disposed to walk.

"Not at this hour," said Lady Townly, "it is quite unfashionable; you will be mistaken for an emerging milliner, or one of the *mid* class gentry, who vex one by their *exterior* advances towards elegance."

"I must brave the public opinion," said Celia, smiling; "nor will the decision in either case pain me—I walk to please myself, and have much enjoyment in exercise."

Sir

Sir Harry offered to attend her.

Celia paused—a moment's reflection told her that *he* would be at once a proper escort, and a *quiescent* friend. She accepted his services, and departed on her errand of compassion.

Arrived at the grounds, she sought the gardener, who, while he answered to her enquiry, reminded her that he was *now* certain he was right, as to what *he* had said of the lady.

Celia repressed the explanation; and as she conducted Sir Harry to the dwelling of Jessy, she simply hinted that she was anxious to see an unhappy and suffering young woman.

The servant girl whom Celia had met with the child, answered the door; sending her card to the hopeless Jessy, she awaited the girl's return.

"My mistress will see *you*, Ma'am," said the girl.

Celia comprehended the emphasis—and Sir

Sir Harry being shewn into the parlour, Celia followed the servant up stairs.

On a sofa, whose whiteness was exceeded by the bleached cheeks of the fair creature who reclined on it, she beheld the desolate Jessy.

"How good!" said the poor sufferer; "but have you considered, Madam? did you come alone?"

Celia blushed—it was the *humility* of a sensitive heart, the conscious *delicacy* of a good mind.

"My brother is below," said Celia; "I heard you were ill, and I flattered myself that you understood my character--I am greatly interested in your happiness—tell me, in few words, how *I* can serve you?"

"Happiness!" said Jessy, with a sigh, "that is impossible! This poor little babe," and she threw aside the folds of her pelisse, which concealed the sleeping boy, "he will soon be an orphan."

"I will protect him," said Celia, rising; and

and as she took the hand of the weeping mother, she cast herself on her knees by the side of the couch; "yes, be at peace on his account. I promise you solemnly —I promise you I will be his protector, his mother!"

"This is too much," said the suffocated Jessy, and her nerveless frame sunk in the bosom of Celia.

"Cruel, unfeeling Berton!" said Celia, as the unrestrained tears fell on the cheeks of the sufferer.

"Where is he?" said Jessy, reviving and looking around her.

"He is not here," said Celia; "compose yourself—give me your commands—I am all attention."

"I saw him to-day," said Jessy, "and he was kind; but it was too late."

Celia endeavoured, and with some success, to draw her from this *most* intense of all her feelings—she spoke with composure of death, but regretted she could not write to her parents. Celia besought *her*

to dictate what she wished to communicate, and undertook the office of addressing her parents. She had folded her arm round the enfeebled invalid, and with all the tenderness of woman was supporting the form, and establishing the good resolves of a fallen *sister*, when a hasty footstep advanced, and in the next moment Belford was ushered in.

"Celia!" said the astonished Belford, "angelic, noble girl!"

"She *is* an angel!" said Jessy, extending her burning hand to the generous Belford.

Belford paused a moment—"Did you come alone?" said he, in a whisper.

Jessy caught the sentence—"Merciful Heaven!" said the humbled child of error, "the restriction is just; even *I* trembled for the fair name of this exalted woman—and do I live to own, that even charity to Jessy might injure the reputation of a *virtuous* woman?"

Her clasped hands were raised to Heaven,

ven, her air was impassioned, yet despairing. Celia, melted into tears, was unable to offer consolation. Belford supplied her place; and as the exalted sentiments of a devout Christian were submitted to the penitent Jessy, as the inspiring ensamples of ever-flowing mercy were illustrated as comforts to the fading sufferer, Celia looked on Belford with an admiration so perfect, an esteem so softened, that had he known her feelings, *that* moment would have bound her to him for ever.

As the influence of that *only* peace to the penitent, "*religious hope*," stole to the heart of Jessy, her countenance became calm; the very lassitude of her frame seemed to bear testimony to the effect of piety on a mind not *naturally* vicious.

"Tell this boy his mother's story," said Jessy, as she gazed on the unconscious babe; "but teach him to love his *father*. How *I* have loved him, Heaven only knows

—how

—how vague!" she continued; "you do not know my sad story."

"Let us not interrupt your present tranquillity," said Belford; "leave this to me—Miss Delacour already feels for your situation; she will not feel less, when she learns how greatly you were deceived."

"This," resumed Jessy, drawing a folded paper from her bosom, "has been duly executed; you will add to my *many* obligations," presenting it to Belford, "by occasionally seeing to its performance."

Belford promised faithfully to observe her injunctions. It was *that* which had called Berton from Highgate, as we have related, and was a provision made for the orphan boy.

The fatigue of the languid Jessy warned her interested friends.

"I will see you to-morrow," said Celia; "but if in the interim you recollect anything which will tend to your peace, if possible commit it to writing, that I

I may be perfectly informed of your wishes."

"I will, I will," said the sufferer, in a hurried voice; "Heaven bless you! I can say no more."

"Walton will call early in the morning," said Belford, as he arose to accompany our heroine; "be careful of yourself, and submit to his directions. Remember, that it is magnanimous to *bear* our lot, and endeavour to sustain our mortal term, by acquiescing to the aids that human wisdom has devised for our support."

"I will, I *am* guided by you, best and most generous of friends," said Jessy. "Once more, Heaven bless you!"

Celia retired, with a heart oppressed by sadness, telling Belford to apprize Sir Harry of her departure—she descended to the fore-court. The Baronet and Belford joined her; the former, though owning visible surprise in meeting Belford at this moment, discovered on the features of Celia so evident a melancholy, that, for-

bearing to enquire into the cause, he became the silent attendant of our heroine.

Belford, more than ever the lover of Celia, owned a melancholy delight in that recent sympathy of sentiment, which had permitted *him* to share in her feelings—his assiduity was of the most conciliating kind; and Sir Harry entered Portman-square, with a strong conviction that the friend of his youth was *duly* estimated by the woman his heart had selected.

"Now, Celia," said Lady Townly, "listen to the important fact," and she read from a fashionable morning print the paragraph following:—

"The lovely Miss Delacour, sister to the no less lovely Lady Townly, will shortly give her fair hand to Mr. Berton, only son and heir to the venerable Sir Peter Berton, Bart. of Berton Hall, Warwickshire."

"What a gross error!" said Celia; "are these things of consequence sufficient to be contradicted?—should they be noticed?"

"By

"By no means," said Sir Harry, "unless you desire it."

"I should be uneasy if it gained credit," said Celia, "yet am unwilling to be made conspicuous—act for me, Townly."

Mr. Belford advised the usual mode in these cases; "for, in truth, I consider the distinction in nowise flattering to Miss Delacour," he continued. "It would be matter of *triumph* to many, for Berton *has* stood high in the scale of fashion, and but for *one* reason, I would advise its remaining unnoticed."

Celia comprehended that reason, and deputed Belford to refute the paragraph on the next morning.

Lady Townly condemned the delicacy of her sister—"I declare to you, Celia, that I was anticipating the vexation it would cause to many of my *friends*," continued her Ladyship; "you are a silly girl, and will live to repent it."

"Never," said Belford: "your sister, my dear Lady Townly, is at once discern-

ing and delicate—her judgment is correct, and though her *decisions* may sometimes give *pain*, the principles on which she acts are too obvious not to be duly appreciated."

"I see how it is—*you* are flattering her, Belford," said Lady Townly; "you have learned her weakness, and, by a pretended acquiescence in her *sentiments*, will, in time, adopt yourself so much to her taste, that you will sit down at last a contented Darby, with Joan by your side."

"Exonerate me from the *foul* part of the charge," said Belford, "and believe me as aspiring as your remark would imply; but *I* have no *faith* in my system, I can assure you: Celia—Miss Delacour, I mean, will in all cases do justice to my motives."

"Unhesitatingly," said Celia; "we understand each other," and she smiled with an affability that gave a momentary flush to the cheek of Belford.

"Adieu!" said this amiable man, as he withdrew, more deeply than ever impress-

ed

ed by the perfections of the woman for whom his heart owned the most tender affection.

Lady Townly soon after departed to a rout; and our heroine seized that moment to explain to Sir Harry her acquaintance with the unfortunate Jessy. The Baronet listened to the artless tale with silent admiration.

When Celia closed her little narrative—"How amiable!" said he, "how consistent with the softness of *women*, is this commiseration for an *erring* woman! Yet, my dear Celia, I rejoice that your usual prudence made *me* your escort in your recent visit. Your accidental meeting with Belford at the dwelling of this poor girl, if it had transpired, would have been translated variously — nay, *your compassion* for the dying Jessy herself would, if known, subject you to free animadversion."

"How perverted must the minds of women be!" said Celia; "I cannot believe it.

it. Is not this deserted girl more worthy of countenance than any *married* woman who falls from *honour*, and in *her* ruin destroys a husband's happiness and her children's prospects? I declare to you, Townly, that, though imperfectly acquainted with the story of my late found friend, I am so assured of her penitence, so convinced that the climax of her error has been too great confidence in an accomplished seducer, that, if Heaven was pleased to spare her, I could love her as a sister—nay, it should be my study to support her in her principles—I would take her to Hadley, and my aunt, oh! how efficient would her mild eloquence prove to a mind like Jessy's! I must write to Hadley to-night," said Celia, "and apprize my aunt of my engagement for the little orphan; she will enter into my plans with avidity"—and she arose to prosecute her purpose.

"One word," said the Baronet; "has Belford avowed himself?"

"He has," said Celia; "and however incompre-

comprehensible I may appear to you, I regret, most sincerely regret, that I am unworthy of so amiable a preference."

"Go, prove your heart, Celia," said Sir Harry, "and give me the happiness of calling Belford brother."

"It cannot be," said Celia; "*he* deserves an entire, a *devoted* heart, and *mine* is true to his *worth*, but incapable of a softer name than friendship."

"Then you are yet 'in Search of a Husband,'" said the Baronet, smiling.

"I believe Fanny's words were prophetic," replied our heroine; "I must be insensible. Adieu!" and kissing her hand to Sir Harry, she retired.

"What ideots we are!" said the Baronet, as he paced the room, in earnest meditation; "on what weak fabrics we build our hopes of happiness! Marriage, the most sacred of all *earthly* engagements, is, of all others, least considered; an intoxicating film shuts our eyes to the lasting *charms* that can alone render our bliss *permanent*,

and we yield our *faith*, our *honour*, to the keeping of a mere beauty. *Some* worship *gold*, others swear to love a woman, from no other principle than that of having borne away the prize that has been *generally* sought. What a mockery! how prophane are such sacrifices! Simplicity of character, the pure emanation of reason, is too *tame*, too *retired*, to claim the homage of man. We pant for notoriety, and we attain it—yes, assuredly we attain it," and a pang of self-accusation wrung his bosom, as he reflected that Lady Townly was visiting *alone*. "What is this but weakness?" continued the musing husband. "The woman, whom we follow as her *shadow*, while her *lover*, whose accents, when given to *another*, create the most painful sensations, this idolized being is no sooner our *own*, than we give her to the world, an offering to its never-sated gulf; and when our misery stares us in the face, we tax her with her falsehood, and wonder whence the mischief grew. It is *man* then, weak,

weak, irresolute man, who, with all his *boasted* courage, cannot face the *imaginary* despot, *custom,* and yields to *etiquette* what is due to honour.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

> "If I lash vice, in general fiction,
> Is't *I* apply, or self conviction?
> * * * * * * *
> I no man call an ape or ass,
> 'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
> Thus void of all offence I write;
> Who claims the fable knows his right."

It was at Florence, I believe, that the celebrated society, called "*Academia della Crusca,*" was instituted, the purpose of which, as is generally known, was for the advancement, or rather the purity of the Italian language; they resolved to throw out, like *bran,* all words which were not good Tuscan. Now, if a system of this sort existed here, and its object was to go beyond the *extirpation* of that *garble* of the tongue,

tongue, *slang*, a language which, though admitted in *society*, is proudly rejected by a *few*—if we were to step beyond this, I repeat, and black-ball *such* as make a *blank* rather than fill a *place* in society—courteous reader, I mean a *space*; your own discernment will determine why—in this case, how desolate would London be! while the court of *Momus* might *rival* even the new-fangled *Jours de Cour* of the Corsican;—and though we know not that his godship could *parcel* out kingdoms, and *make* principalities, the *assumed* titles of his *votaries* might be sufficient to keep up the laugh. Nay, he might *appoint* his slaves. What could be more appropriate, than to place the "Knight of the *Brim*," Sir Robert Vat, to the task of *polishing* those *bells*, to which *his* follies have kept time, for a *Roman* age at least; and a noble *contention* for that *mask*, which the *jester* wears, might give *him* a just idea of modern acquirements; they could *fight* for the *gay* deception, and thus prove their *election* to his

his favour. I beg pardon of this very *numerous* family, and regret, with unfeigned concern, that it is impossible, in an *octavo* volume, to do *justice* to their *many* claims to *pre-eminent* distinction. I have seen and inhaled the freshness of the " *Bucks' Boquets* ;" seen them *start* for *Salt-Hill*, with all the *enthusiasm* of real *whips* ; witnessed the *grievous* disaster of one *blade*, who, in the moment of extatic hope, was obliged to have recourse to a *rope*, to aid his departure. The *coincidence* was odd ; and I was musing on it, when a sympathetic whisper ran through the crowd.—" How provoking !" says one.—" How *unlucky* !" says another.—I asked the cause.—The *father* of one of the bucks had thought fit to *die* on that day.—Poor man, thought I, he has reached *his* goal.—" But he will join them on the *next* shew-day," said a tandem-driver at my elbow.—Alas ! thought I, and may not *he* too be called ? and what will it avail that he could guide the reins, if he was unable to put the *bridle* on

on his imagination—if he was emulous to run a *race* daily exhibited by men *bred* to the *vocation*, and was unmindful of *that race* which is set before us? Short-sighted mortals that we are, we are ever *preparing* for *fancied* journies, and forgetting that *destined* and *immutable* one, from which neither *riches*, nor even *youth*, can exempt us: and he who *guides* the fleeting carriage in the career of fancy, rides *guard* in *that* which leads to his eternal doom.

Taking leave of this *fashionable family*, we will return to Celia, who had addressed her aunt on the subject of the orphan boy, and concluded her epistle by an intimation, that she should not remain much longer in London.

"I consider," said Celia, in the close of her letter, "that I have sacrificed enough in my present visit;—all my hopes in the stability of Fanny have vanished.—Oh that she would commit her child to our mutual care!—I have proposed the matter more than once, but *she* will not hear of it:—

Townly

Townly desires it; but he yields to her in this, as in every thing. Yet it is amazing to me," continued Celia, "that she should make such a *point* of this; for no *mother* sees more of her *children* than that which is mixed in her *toilet* duties (from which it were wise to seclude them), and half an hour *spared* from the general buzz, which ascends from the eating-room to the drawing-room, and spends itself in fashions, *admiration* of *present* exhibitions, and a little *innocent* scandal; and the young mimics *acquire*, in these *occasional* permissions, the ground-work of *that* character which is ultimately to lead them into and *establish* them *in* society. It will seem almost incredible to you, my dear Madam, that *fathers* of families are, with a *few* exceptions, the leading men of the day. I have never *yet* seen a man *affectionately* interested in his treasures:—a few insignificant *questions* have reached my ear—such as—'Well, what did *Monsieur* D. say to-day? Your *carriage* is improved. Have

you

you studied that *chromatic?—Remember* you must excel Lady Maria P———, or I shall be disappointed.'—And one or two have amused me, by their *anxiety* to have their children acquainted with *ancient* history, and have anticipated *perfection* in those intellects, which, by a *romantic* study of *heroic* deeds, has induced them, with no less *vanity* than misapplication of *time,* to *enact* scenes that *true* taste alone could illustrate. Excepting one amiable and enlightened woman, I have not heard *religious* knowledge termed as of any importance; and her family are by no means so *accomplished* as others with whom I have mixed; yet some traits of *unaffected* feeling, some deeds *effectual,* yet unostentatious, have convinced me that there is no foundation for happiness, but in the mind which is modelled on those precepts which were written for our learning."

Though Miss Delacour's letter entered no farther on this subject, we cannot forbear

bear a *little* animadversion. The present age, with a *disdain* that *accompanies superior* intellect, *justly* deride *precepts* and *examples*;—they strike out something *new*. "There *have* been *many good* sort of women, *obedient* wives, and moral *mothers*," says the mother of the *present* day; "but the times are changed. Can we *possibly* give up our *mornings* to our children?—Must we not *receive* our *friends*, and leave our *cards*, from *one* to *six*?—Well, then, can we mix in *society*, without devoting some *time* to the toilet? We dine, either at *home* in company, or with *some* one of our dear friends. *Parties* succeed, and tired nature seeks the wonted *restorative*—we *sleep*—and day *again* dawns on us"—aye, and mid-day too, ye might add.—The *sun* has *set* upon a *period* of your *misapplied* talents, and it *rises* upon your *entranced* faculties; but *all the talents*, or rather that *class* of the *rational* animal *creation*, called *man*—how is *his* time wasted?—The statement

ment will come into most *narrow* limits—he gives his *name* to a *woman*—he *supports* her *establishment*—*sometimes* without *public* contributions;—he *meets* her in the *Park* or *Bond-street*—*hears* of her at the *console* tables—owns all the pusillanimity of a *wilful* coward, when *very* superior *notice levels* her with the *lowest* of the erring, and *contentedly* wears those honours which *real* courage would not only *disown*, but *resent*. Does it require *discernment* to trace these evils to their source? Assuredly not.

We *talk* of antiquity, and *pretend* to a *taste* for *ancient reliques*; but the *character* must be *new*.—We attempt not to *imitate* the *pious patience* of a *Penelope*, the *matron* graces of a *Cornelia*, the *feminine* tenderness of *Andromache*, nor the *magnanimous* intellect of a *Grey*, a *Russel*, or a *Pembroke*, Our *moral* emulation is *truly* modern; and we would sooner *follow* a ——, from *assignations* in *Kensington Gardens*, to a *divorce* at the hands of *human laws*, than be found in

in the *simple* path of *duty, supported* by *Christianity*, and *encouraged* by *that* hope which sets *all* earthly matters at nought.

It will appear to a *fashionable* reader (if any such glance over these pages) that this is a most *antique*, if not a most *impertinent* digression.—If they feel *very* sore, the *motto* to our chapter is their *mirror* ;—if not, they are *lenient*, and I thank them.

Another morning had dawned on Celia; it *drew* from her *mortal* term, but it could not *abridge* her *eternal* confidence; for it was destined to the *performance* of her *duty*.

Her recent interview with Jessy was yet fresh in her memory; and though the countenance and support of Sir Harry and Belford were efficient, in themselves, to shield her from censure, in that interest which she yet purposed to prosecute, with regard to the fair unfortunate, it was the wish of Celia to take a *female* opinion on the subject.—Lady Berton might, and *would* take a lively share in her feelings;

but

but our heroine could not resolve on distending her maternal heart, by exhibiting her son in his true character. Mrs. Welgrave occurred to Celia, and she resolved on seeking her counsel, and asking her company, in the visit she intended to make this morning.

She had arranged her plan, when Mr. Belford was announced. The mind which is actuated by pure principles, that owns no *sinister* motive, is unguarded, and liable to *generous* error. Belford felt the full force of this, as Celia, with ingenuous confidence, asked him to attend *her* to Devonshire-place.

They had descended the steps, and were proceeding on their way, when Mr. Berton joined them:—he was *profusely* eloquent in his regrets, at having been *drawn* from them the preceding day. Celia was replying, with a moderate, yet *virtuous* dignity, when an elderly man seized the arm of Berton, and, in a tone of impressive agony, demanded his child.

 "Give

"Give her to me," said the old man, with proud authority.—"You *have* murdered her mother, but *I* am *spared* to accuse you."

Berton stood transfixed for a moment.—"He is deranged," said he.—Recovering himself, and turning to the hoary-headed stranger, he added—"My friend, I will attend you;" and he motioned the old man to retire with him.

"*Friend!*" said the stranger disdainfully, "I *scorn* the appellation.—"Lady Townly lives near this," he continued, addressing Celia.—"Tell me, Madam, does Miss Delacour reside *with* her?"

"My name is Delacour," said Celia.

"Then *you* are the *honourable* victim of this *libertine*," said the stranger.

"Heaven forbid!" said Celia.—"No, my good Sir, you are deceived."

"I must, I will believe you," said the old man:—"but my child, perhaps she perishes—where is she?"

Celia

Celia looked towards Belford—the glance was intelligent.

"Allow *me* to offer what consolation I can," said Belford.—"Her name?"

"Jessy Collins," said the stranger, standing in an attitude of fixed attention.

Berton grasped the hand of the stranger. "I will lead you to her," said he.—"This moment shall witness our union—go with *me*."

"Vile dissembler!" said the agitated old man, releasing himself from his importunate hold—"Begone! I loath you."

Berton obeyed the scornful mandate, and Celia, with a presence of mind which her hopelessness in the *fate* of Jessy induced, besought Belford to get a hack, and proceed to the dwelling of the unhappy girl.

The coach was procured, and our heroine, now wholly occupied in devising some gentle means of apprising Jessy of this unexpected bliss, was seated with the wretched father and Belford.—No consi-

deration, as to the propriety of that *part* she was taking, entered her mind. It was agreeable to feeling, no doubt, but it was *contrary* to the *custom* of *society*;—"yet the very surprise," said Celia, mentally, "if *unguardedly* betrayed, might waft her fleeting spirit, ere she could *hear* her father *bless* her.—A *woman*, in such a *case*, will act best."

It was not *vanity*, my fair readers, which impelled *this* belief; it was the *natural* feeling of a *woman*—of a *woman* true to herself—a creature who, duly *appreciating* her *rank* in creation, felt that *offices* of *gentleness*, of *sympathy*, were *her* peculiar attributes—and she fled, with all the *humility* of *virtue*, to aid the *penitent*, *enhance* her *hopes*, and *hide* her *conscious* blushes in her bosom.

Arrived at the dwelling of this child of sorrow, Celia ascended to the sick apartment; she entered lightly, accompanied by the servant. The unconscious Jessy was in

in a deep slumber.—Celia watched over her couch some minutes; and, as she beheld the pallid features of the wasted invalid, she almost doubted that she could *bear* the blissful surprise.

At length, after a deep sigh, she awoke. Her eyes, no longer beaming with expression, seemed too weak to meet the partial light that was admitted through the window shades. Her cold and nerveless hand had felt the impression of a *genuine* sensibility, ere her feeble voice found utterance.

"What a dream!" said Jessy, as she held the hand of our heroine.

"Was it soothing?" asked Celia.

"I was *forgiven*," said the languid sufferer.

"You *are* forgiven," said Celia;—"for God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. He bringeth into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived."

"The comfort of such a friend, at this hour!" said Jessy.—"I cannot write, nor say

say to you all I wish.—Mr. Belford will do this; but *you* will soften the truth to my——."

Celia interrupted the exhausted sufferer, and, with *prudential* caution, unfolded the interesting fact.

"My *father!*" said the enraptured saint —"Oh, my father!" and she raised herself with a strength almost supernatural.— "Where is he?"

The venerable parent broke from the restraining arm of Belford.

> "With eager step to her he flew,
> And caught her in his arms,
> But found, alas! an ashy hue
> Was settled o'er her charms."

If the errors of Jessy were *deep*, her *early* fate, and the *penitence* which marked that close, might even, from the bosom encircled by the sacred rays of chastity, claim *pity* and esteem—and it was accorded; for Celia, whose warm heart expanded to the admission

admission of *hope*, was cast from the glimmering beam, as she beheld the inanimate form of Jessy resting on the bosom of her father. In vain the old man besought her to look upon him; she spoke not; her eyes, *fixed* in unmeaning stillness, yet, in their *last* effort, had beamed a duteous expression; she *heard* her pardon, and she bore the grateful blessing to her God. The awful truth was soon evident—and now the *living* claimed the care of Celia; for Collins, not prepared for so sudden a shock, became frantic.

"She was the pride of my heart," said the old man, as he placed her marble hands in his bosom.—"Jessy, my beloved Jessy, speak to me.—We will go together, my child.—She wont believe me," he continued.—"*I* have been severe—I should have *sought* her."

Belford interposed—he besought him to be calm.—"She is happy," said Belford.—"Look on her features—how *serene*! *you* have effected this;—she has breathed her

last

last in those arms from which she considered herself an alien. Let this comfort you."

At this moment the orphan boy appeared;—he approached the couch—Celia caught the child to her heart.—"Dear infant," said Celia, "you are mine—from this hour you are mine;" and overpowered by emotion, she would have fallen to the ground, had not Belford supported her.

"We must go," said Belford.—"My beloved, my compassionate Celia, I cannot allow you to remain."

"Think for me," said our heroine, as, led by her attached friend, she descended to the coach, yet in waiting.

Belford placed her in the vehicle, and returning to the disconsolate father, apprised him that he would see him in an hour; then joining Celia, proceeded to Portman-square. That active benevolence, which had borne our heroine through the scene we have depicted, gave place to the most depressing feelings, now that the necessity

cessity for *action* had ceased. Belford was at one moment condemning *himself* for having *allowed* her to be thus mentally distressed, and, in the next, applauding that divine sensibility which thus exalted her above woman.

"Celia," said the adoring Belford, "why did I ever see you? Woman, loveliest of all created beings, why are ye not, in *sentiment* as in *nature, one* great family?"

"Be my friend," said Celia, giving her hand to Belford.—"To you I confide the mode of conveying the child to me, as soon as possible;—see the good old man, and assist him in his mournful office.—Do more for me," continued Celia;—"explain as much as is necessary to my sister and Townly, and spare me all conversation on the subject at present."

Belford undertook her commands with a melancholy pleasure, and our heroine sought refuge in her chamber.

Sir Harry, who was alone, disdained not to shed the tear of pity for the youthful victim;

victim; while his unfeigned admiration of the conduct of Celia at once evinced *his* affection for her, and increased that of the generous Belford. Lady Townly was visiting; nor when she heard the tender tale, did she elicit any of those semblances so *graceful* in her sex. She was alarmed, lest the *world* should *talk* on the subject. It was a most *unusual interference* in a woman of rank, she believed;—she was *assured* her sister meant well; but she could not understand how it was at all necessary that she should take interest in the concerns of a *stranger*, and *that* stranger an unfortunate *unmarried* woman. The Baronet, disgusted by the callosity of her Ladyship's sentiments, used no argument to convince her; and our heroine, unfitted for society, remained in her room during the remainder of the day.

There is a positiveness in *age*, which is not ill termed *vanity*; but, as the title-page of this book setteth forth, the *author* is an *antique*. Excuse her garrulity, generous reader;

reader; she *knows*, for she has experienced the "human misery," that *episodes* are very intrusive things; but as it is in the power, and at the pleasure of her readers, to pass them by, she cannot resist saying a little more of Jessy.

Mr. Berton, as has been said, was bred to the law: it was in a *circuit* he made with the judge, in a northern county, that the innocent Jessy came in his path. The period of the assizes (though Heaven knows their *purport* is diametrically opposite to gaiety) always occasions a species of cheerfulness, a relaxation from business, that not unfrequently trains *victims* for a *coming* term.

Jessy Collins was the youngest of two children; their parents were in that happy rank of life, *moderate* independance; they knew how far their *wishes* might stray; and their *wants* were, from *habitual* principle, strictly within its limits. Mr. Collins *had* been in the navy, in his youth; but wounds, and a *disgust* to the service, caused him to resign

resign the smiling deep, and, on a small farm, seek comfort and repose. Their elder child, a son, had, from infancy, evinced much volatility of disposition;—various were the resolves he had made, as to the profession he could like; he spurned the idea of a rural life;—the sea was his aversion:—in fact, he wished to be a gentleman; but this, beside the *uselessness* of the calling, was beyond the means of his father. Thus he grew up a *rustic idler*, just learned enough to be the companion of the 'Squire and his fox-hunting companions, and sufficiently quiescent in his principles to be *indifferent* to the numberless difficulties in which his extravagance plunged his family. Often did the fond mother disguise the painful truth, and as often *administer* to his *follies*, by supplying his *imaginary* wants.

Jessy, to whom an useful, and somewhat *ornamental* education had been given, was, at the age of seventeen, admitted as an *assistant* in the seminary from which *her* little

hoard of knowledge had been drawn. It was more in conformity with their *circumstances* than their *wishes,* that they parted with their daughter; but she was happy, and esteemed; and the *vacations* were periods to which the anxious parents ever looked, with delight and pride:—they were yet *independant,* though the dissipation of William had diminished their comforts. Jessy had quitted the school for a few days—for it was the *gala* season, the assizes.

William, enchanted with the variety introduced by the egress and regress of new faces, mixed in the circle;—he had dined at the Town Hall, and, by the vivacity of his manners, attracted the notice of Berton. They met at the 'Squire's dinner. Intoxicated by the notice of so elegant a man, he was ashamed to avow *who* he was. Chance, however, elucidated the fact; for Jessy, with her father, met the aspiring William, in company with his new friend.

Berton was charmed by the appearance of

of the artless Jessy, and, with ill-concealed vexation, bore the marked indifference of Mr. Collins, who neither seemed to estimate his rank, nor desire his acquaintance. Thus he took a *professional* revenge; he led William into excesses; and one night's *play* made him a *bankrupt* in honour, and a *debtor* to his *new* friend.

Berton treated the affair as a trifle; but William, not wholly destitute of pride, resolved on throwing himself on the clemency of his father. He had beside a new object in view;—he wished to go to London, and Mr. Berton had half promised to use *his* interest with a man in power, in order to obtain him a place:—but when the unhappy father was apprised of the fact, the hopes of William vanished;—his whole property could scarce cover the demand.—With a conscious pride, the venerable parent addressed the man of law;—he submitted his proposals of liquidating the debt by installments, and awaited the reply with inconceivable anxiety.

It

It was the moment for a *generous* mind to shew itself; and it was *equally* the golden moment for a *speculative* libertine. Berton was the *latter*: he fled to the farm; and while, with an appearance of exalted sentiment, he disowned the paltry remuneration, he so effectually blinded the admiring couple, that they gazed on him as a prodigy. William was now the sworn friend of Berton; and Jessy, what was she? the *silent* adorer of the generous, the accomplished Berton, an adept in whatever system he prosecuted. The wily seducer betrayed not his passion, till he saw his power over the innocent girl; and then, with well-feigned regrets, he cursed his stars, that had led him to contemplate a woman, who, while she made his misery, was cruelly indifferent to his anguish.

Jessy believed, when she expressed her *gratitude* to the generous friend of her brother, that her language was appropriate; but when he asked her for a softer sentiment, she wished she dared reply to him.

him. He dissipated her *humility*—for he meant to *humble* her; therefore was it fit he should lead her from herself. He now wished to get rid of William, and, with all the eloquence he so well knew how to apply, he painted a soldier's life in colours so glowing, that the infatuated youth swallowed the bait, and, with letters of introduction, quitted the scene of his childhood. When a man is both *plaintiff* and *defendant* in a cause, it would be *strange* if he *lost* his suit; at least the *juror* who *judges* in these cases is not *suborned*. Nay, it *has* been observed, that the *interregnum*, in *some* cases, is perfectly *distinct* from the *law's delay*, which leaves the suit at issue; yet am *I* firmly of opinion, that there is a *silent arbitrament* in such cases, and a day of *justice* set *apart* for making the *verdict known*.

Be that as it may, William attained his object, and bore the colours of an English regiment to the theatre of war. Berton, like a skilful general, withdrew for awhile; he

he knew his interest in the citadel; he returned; and while he avowed his passion undiminished, he represented his parents as inflexible. Jessy had quitted her situation in the school;—she was *now* the comfort of her parents.

It is grateful to speak of *woman* in her *lustre*, for she was born to diffuse happiness, and temporise the rude nature of man, who would be *savage* without her; but it is lamentable to speak of her as the blighted floweret of the garden, the plant torn from the cherished path of *innocence*, and doomed to sorrow by that *polished* savage, *man*. Yet so it was:—confiding, *implicitly* confiding in the man who had appeared, in more instances than one, the most disinterested and generous of friends, she, in an evil hour, quitted the fostering arms of parental affection, for those of her accomplished betrayer.

Neither *time* nor *distance* could still the warnings of ever-wakeful *Conscience*;—she

"Our dawning purposes of heart explores;
See, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes ev'ry fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills."

The villa at Highgate was selected as a retreat for the dishonoured Jessy. Here, if she knew a tranquil moment, it was when the insidious Berton invented fairy promises of better days—of days when, sanctioned by his parents' approval, he should lead her from her *unworthy* osbcurity.

Days, weeks, and months, stole on. She was a mother, without a mother's sacred title. To be brief, near three weeks had elapsed—Love, though *suffering*, is prone to *belief*—In *unlawful* love, it is a cobweb veil, which we want *courage* to remove.—In that love which *Heaven* approves, the deceit is *transient*—for *virtue* is *proudly* daring.

Jessy felt she had fallen—that *she* was not destined to wear the name of wife;—and her secret grief soon effected a visible change in her person:—the death of Wil-

liam

liam had reached her ear, through the public prints.—*Home* rose on her imagination—who would console her wretched parents?—yet she had not power either to *quit* the man she loved, or *meet* her deceived parents. Hitherto the attention of Berton had been *such* as is usual in these cases;—that is, he passed much of his time with her—was liberal in all his dispositions for her—was fond of his child, and called the villa his *home*. It was by mere chance that Belford surprised Berton, at his favourite retreat. No elucidation was necessary with the discerning Belford.—Jessy had never seen a stranger, till that moment;—and the timid shame of her manner spoke forcibly to the heart of Belford:—he questioned the gay seducer. Berton, now secure in his prize, was *partially* candid.—Belford saw no reason *why* he should hesitate to give his name to the woman whom his arts had destroyed. The *counsellor laughed* at the idea;—he was too well *schooled* in the *higher* courts to feel the

necessity of so *degrading* a step, and from this moment Belford ceased to be his friend.

The arrival of Celia caused a revolution in the heart of Berton; and he now owned, or *believed* he owned, a *sincere* passion.—The villa was neglected; or if he *did* visit it, he was abstracted and uneasy. The *furniture* displeased him—the child was troublesome—and Jessy was no longer pleasing.—He was offended by her *tears*; nor could he possibly imagine what cause *she* had to grieve. Berton was blinded by his *new* passion; but the *mental* perception of Jessy was quickened, by her isolated situation. The dreadful truth rushed on her mind;—through her servant, she heard that Sir Peter and Lady Berton were in London, and that a young lady, on a visit to them, was talked of, as the intended wife of her betrayer. George, alarmed at his mother's avowed intention of visiting the villa, by a stratagem removed his victim to a lodging in the New Road, where, excepting

ing in the *punctuality* of his *remittances*, he was rarely visible. The health of the wretched girl repressed those exertions, which her returning sense of virtue impelled;—she could not work—nor could *she* have found *countenance*, had she made the attempt—it is only the *splendid* child of error, who is *tolerated* in this era of *glowing* intellect.

Jessy was hastening to that " bourne from which no traveller returns;"—her ill-fated passion yet gnawed at her heart;—in a fit of despair, she addressed her *first* anonymous billet to Miss Delacour, on the morning that Celia saw Belford alight from the hackney-coach. *He* had unexpectedly discovered the abandoned girl—he had won her confidence, by the generous sympathy of his manner; and those words which met the ear of Celia, were the concluding wishes of this amiable being, who had been earnest in persuading the sufferer to quit the protection of her seducer, and allow

him to ask the qualified support of a lady, whom he named as the most amiable of her sex. The female in question was Mrs. Welgrave.

Jessy rejected the interposition; *she* had no faith that any *virtuous* woman would mingle her *tears* with the penitent child of credulity;—she lived to yield this opinion, for *one* gentle, amiable *woman* not only ministered to her griefs, but spoke *peace* to her bosom—*encouraged* her humbled soul to seek comfort from that source whence only *true* comfort is to be found—who tranquillized her *earthly* anxiety, by becoming the *guardian* of her child; *that* woman was *Celia*.

What a catalogue of woe may be brought within the compass of a *few* pages! —for it is not *necessary* to *illustrate* the thousand pangs that agitate the consciously *chastened* heart;—the attempt would be difficult:—*many* would *turn* from the soul-harrowing tale; while those who possess

sensibility

sensibility will *imagine* what language would imperfectly convey.—Sympathy, *charity*, will sketch the portrait.

Thus have we brought the tale of Jessy to its close.

What can be offered in extenuation for Berton? The world, that is, the *fashionable* world, would qualify the glaring immorality.

"Men of rank (and of such I speak), if wrong, can scarce avoid sinning beyond themselves. How pestilential their example falls on the lower world, which, under the welcome force of such illustrious authority, turn dissolute."

— — — — — —

"Great men in the wrong, are powerful engines of mischief, and, like bursting bombs, destroy themselves, and all around them."

YOUNG ON PLEASURE.

If we look to the stations of men, in all *trivial* points, why is it that the exact state of their *morals* is beneath our regard? The very *antiquity* of the system should exalt it in the eyes of *this* generation; but I will venture to affirm, that the women in

" *search*

"*search* of husbands," never cast a thought on this most essential of all considerations.

"Shame on the world," on the fair *arbiters* of man's *terrestrial* happiness.

> "Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom you trust,
> Would you but think how seldom fools are just,"

your fates in *this* life might be eminently happy;—nay, more, the "hoary tyrant," who levelled you with the dust, would snatch the precious *relique* (your spotless fame), nor suffer cold oblivion to steep those deeds, whose record are a nation's pride.

I am not a democrat, courteous reader; I desire not the destruction of the "red book;" but I blush in idea, and anticipate the stained pages of that "*annual* red book," which tells of *genealogy*, and *marriages*, and *divorces*.—What a *history* of the *times* is thus *illustriously* transmitted to *posterity*!

"The counsellor, the elegant Berton," says

says the impatient reader, "can you estimate such men?"

"The fair, 'tis true, by genius should be won,
As flow'rs unfold their beauties to the sun;
And yet, in female scales, a fop outweighs,
And wit must wear the *willow* and the *bays*.
Nought shines so bright in vain Liberia's eye,
As riot, impudence, and perfidy."

— — — — — —

"For him, as yet unchang'd, she spreads her charms."

Berton, as has been amply shewn, deserved the favour of *such* women. Few of *his* associates knew Jessy, or her story.—Thus the man who attended a *judge*, for the express purpose of executing and enforcing those *laws*, the boasted pride of his country, broke through all laws, *human* and *divine*, plunged an adoring woman, and a virtuous family, in infamy, and *remained* at *large*. I deny it—he was fettered;—but the *chains* had not *yet* entered into his soul.—One pang, one *excruciating* pang, reached his heart. When the *death* of

of Jessy was announced, how appropriate are the lines of that eloquently tender poet, the simple Goldsmith!

> " When lovely woman stoops to folly,
> And finds, too late, that men betray,
> What charm can soothe her melancholy,
> What art can wash her guilt away?
> The only art her guilt to cover,
> To hide her shame from every eye,
> To bring repentance to her lover,
> And wring his bosom—is to die."

If the part taken by our heroine appears censurable, we cannot help it;—she had *heard* of *divorced* wives being *seen* in *some* societies, and of pining *Magdalens* dying *unpitied*, lost, for want of care.

" The *first* shall never be *my* companions," said Celia; " the *latter* claim my compassion—for they are unhappy."

> " Charity, decent, modest, easy, kind,
> Softens the rough, and rears the abject mind;
> Knows with just reins, and gentle hand, to guide,
> Betwixt vile shame, and arbitrary pride:

Not

Not soon provoked, she easily forgives,
And much she suffers, as she much believes.
Soft peace she brings; wherever she resides,
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives;
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And opens in each heart a little Heaven."

It is by no means incompatible with youth to be cheerful and wise. I believe, at the same time, it is possible to be *lenient* to the *follies* of the thoughtless, without *renouncing* our *own stability;* and, above all, I would draw a *line* betwixt the gloomy *arrogance* of a *superstitious* faith, and that mild essence of *perfection, revealed* religion. There is *nothing austere* in *charity,* in *mercy*—it was *accorded* with a tender regard for our *weak* capacities.—The most, *exalted* of those *miracles* to which our grateful hearts can refer, were elicited in the most simple, yet impressive manner. We are *asked,* and tenderly admonished to *believe.* Be it ours not to tempt a *rebuke,* by turning from the path before us—but let us equally avoid the er-

ror

ror of *presumption*—condemn *none*, for *vanity* blinds us. Our perceptions are various. One eye sees danger, where no danger exists;—another anticipates ill, and believes himself *humble*. If, in the perishable term of mortal life, we are *grateful* for the good bestowed, yet duly mindful that *all* earthly good is *evanescent*, we can scarcely *fail* to estimate *eternal* life as it *should* be estimated. *Gloom* must yield to *innocent* cheerfulness—*fear* to *modest* hope.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

> "Ah! how unjust to nature and himself,
> Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent man!"

Not to dwell longer on the melancholy subject, suffice it to say, that the little orphan became the immediate charge of Celia. Jessy was consigned to the tomb, and her sorrowing parent retired (after an afflicting, yet not inconsolable, interview with our heroine) to his solitary home.

That *paragraph* which, in *fashionable* life, is *sometimes* an excellent *philippic* and *sometimes* the ebullition of *malice*, had drawn Collins from his humble retirement. He thought, and with justice, that the marriage of Berton would make *his* child a desolate, if not an abandoned woman; and he fled to London, to rescue *her*, and warn the *woman*

woman to whom the artful betrayer had worn the mask of honour. The result has been pourtrayed. In vain Berton wrote, and implored the justly indignant Collins to grant him an interview—to let *him* protect the child: he was inexorable—"I forgive you," said he, in the only answer he ever accorded—"Your child is in the care of a *virtuous* woman. *I* would not have yielded this right, had I not *felt* that *your last* victim has not *long* to remain in *this* world."

The effect was such as might be expected. On the *unenlightened, guilt* usually induces intemperance; on those who are *termed polished,* the *effect* is the *same;* but we *call* it *dissipation.* The villa at Highgate was sold; for *furniture,* and trees, "and flowers, will speak, with most miraculous organ," to *some* minds. Berton was not *cheerful*—he was *gay;* and his parents, while they wondered at the change, were blessed in the deception, for *they* were unacquainted with *facts.*

Lady Townly saw the zeal of Celia, as exerted towards the little George, with an eye truly worldly; she believed that nothing but *love* for the *father* could induce such kindness for the *son*. But when Celia expressed her detestation of the libertine, and explained her views for the child, her Ladyship was more than usually severe. Our heroine was not to be laughed out of her purpose; and the answer of Mrs. Mansfield being favourable to her wishes, she summoned Patty to her dressing-room, and was proceeding to give directions for *her* immediate departure with the child, whom she wished to remove ere Lady Berton could see him, when an unexpected obstacle presented itself.

"Me, Miss!" said Patty, "*must* I go?"

"It is my wish you should," said Celia; "I can rely on your care, and the little fellow is delicate."

"Certainly, Miss," said Patty; "but indeed, Miss Celia, I like London much better

better than I thought I should—I hope I may come back again?"

Celia paused; there was a visible confusion in her domestic, that alarmed her—"It would be an useless fatigue," said Celia; "for I shall soon follow you."

Patty blushed—"I hope you will forgive me," said the weeping girl; "but I am *married*."

"Married!" said Celia; "to whom?"

"To Mr. Donnel, Ma'am," replied Patty; "he is a very good young man; and I have *wrote* to Mrs. Wilkins to ask Madam for my money, as we mean to go into business in London."

Celia owned it was too *late* to offer advice; but she feared that her unsuspecting attendant had been the dupe of a designing man. Telling Mrs. Donnel to consult with her husband, and consider whether they were not more likely to succeed in the country than in London, she bade her expect *her* assistance, in any moderate plan they might suggest.

Patty

Patty hastened to impart the blissful tidings. She returned, however, in a few minutes—" He will not consent," said Patty; " he says the country always gives him the *vapours*; and he has the *prospect* of being *groom* to a *buck* soon, and *that* is very profitable."

Celia ventured to explain—" it was an *uncertain* employ; they were exposed to much hazard," &c. &c.

" Oh no, Ma'am," said Patty, who had become a most *fashionable* convert, " it is the *easiest* life—why, their *masters drive them*, and they *wear* such nice clothes, and get such presents, for *them* sort of gentlemen have a great many *fancies*, and if a *hat* is not made as they like, they give it to their grooms, and they even buy *nosegays* to make them look smart; and then, as to *living*, why, they get *champagne very* often at their dinner—to be sure, Donnel says they are not *regular* in their *pay*; but then the *profits* make up for that."

Celia saw with regret that her servant

 had

had made a bad choice; and worse than all, she feared her *principles* had suffered an innovation, that her *now* fixed *destiny* would establish—"and this," thought Celia, "is the effect of a season in London. Poor Patty, if *she* was 'in search of a husband,' she has attained her object; pray Heaven she may not repent her weak credulity!"

Patty undertook the tender charge; and our heroine, as she saw the little orphan depart, felt gratitude of the most poignant sort.

"God, I thank thee," said Celia, "that in my weak hands thou hast placed the power to be useful!—may I never pervert that only good of riches, 'its affiliating balm!'—direct me, oh gracious Providence, by thy unerring guide, and while my *faith* leads me to ask thy illumination, may my *deeds* prove acceptable in thy sight!"

If the applause of the *world* can smooth even the features of age, and give *confidence* to its *aspiring* votaries, it is no less certain that conscious *integrity* owns a power infinitely superior;

superior; for it is *retired,* and consequently an ineffable charm in *woman.*

Celia had announced her intended departure, and had met from her sister *some* opposition, but more ridicule—"It is not my *dislike* to London," said Celia, "which influences my determination; its amusements are in many points attractive; and I think it is *possible* to be as happy here as in any place; but then the *mind* must be free. I would not be *compelled* to go into society, when my spirits were not equal to the exertion; nor would I open my doors indiscriminately to *all* the town. *Select* your friends, and London is an intellectual mart; but when I behold the smile of friendship in one morning, which has in the *preceding* one been *impertinently* satirical, when I hear the same voice, nay the same breath, *censure* and *applaud,* I *must* deplore that weakness which *sacrifices reason* to *fashion.*"

"Celia," said Lady Townly, "you will pine for the *varieties* of this wicked town;

 you

you have acquired a *taste* for elegancies, which will be ill supplied by the sameness at Hadley."

"I think not," said Celia; "but if I *should* feel the *vacuum*, I will not be disingenuous."

The entrance of Lady Bab Blindon and her brother gave a turn to the conversation.

"Is it true we are doomed to lose you?" said Mr. Danbury—"Cruel Miss Delacour! like a meteor, you have shone in our path, and *now* you withdraw your beams."

"All luminaries are transient," said Celia, smiling; "but as this is by no means a *dull* era, take comfort—a *constellation* may bless your sight."

"Poor Lady Milner!" said Lady Bab—"only think! her tyrant has made no settlement on her, and is so impertinently *jealous*, that she is more miserable than she was with Ellincourt."

"Ungrateful wretch!" said Lady Townly—"I pity her from my heart."

"She

" She looked very lovely this morning," said Danbury; " I met her at Bridoon's; her spirits are much lowered; they say, but I don't believe it, that Sir Frederick was not anxious to *marry* her; nay, that she was forced to supplicate him, and *affect* sickness, ere she gained her point."

" Milner was always proud," said Lady Townly; " and I doubt not is vexed *internally* that she will not be *received* at Court; but, to my idea, this is a matter of no consequence; for the *expence* is immense in these cases."

" The *ejection* costs something," thought Celia; " and the *record* is made in *another* Court."

" I know you are domestic, my fair Cinderella," said Lady Bab, addressing our heroine, " you should go to the ——; really it is vastly curious."

" It's a famous lounge," said Danbury; " yet I'll be quizzed if it does not confuse me; for the Rumford stoves, and the *Amazonian teakettle*, the statues, the maps,

 and

and the library, were so jumbled in my brain yesterday, that I dreamed last night, that, by galvanic power, my *head* was *boiled* in that hideous kettle, and the *librarian*, with a learned *benediction*, pronounced the *effect* to be, that my intellects would henceforth be the mirror of human wisdom—but I awoke."

"And day brought back *your* night,"

said Lady Townly, laughing.

"An excellent *jeu d'esprit*," said Danbury, "admirable, upon my soul!—I will *transmit* that."

Lord Quadrige and Sir Robert Vat were announced. The usual salutations having passed, Sir Robert advanced to Danbury—"No hoaxing," said he; "be honest—Did *you* insert the paragraph in the *Post* this morning?"

Mr. Danbury declared, on the honour of an *author*, *he* had not scribbled for the last *three* days.

"I will trace the foul calumny," said Sir Robert

Robert—"nothing but *vanity* could induce the impertinence."

"Sheer envy, by the gods!" said Lord Quadrige; "but, my dear Bob, what could lead you to think Danbury capable of such a thing?"

"I know he *writes*," said Sir Robert, "and have seen his paragraphs so often, that I would have betted my *beaver* as to the style."

The ambiguous smile of the suspected author was observed by Lady Townly—she enjoyed a little *innocent* mischief.

"Give us the fact," said her Ladyship; "I am a faithful translator of countenances; I shall detect him."

"The *Post* of this morning," said the enraged buck, "speaks of the *barouche-driving club* as having made a *poor* exhibition in its last meeting; the *beavers* are not *accurately* described; and, above all, the *cattle* are reviled—by Heavens! they say they are not *blood*, not *high-bred*. Can anything be more vexatious? I *observed*

that

that we did not collect such an *audience* as *usual*; and am persuaded it was a *combination* to *damn* our fame."

"Guilty in *part*, but not *in toto*," said Lady Townly—"that is, he *laughs* at your *anger*, while he refutes your *charge*."

"What a charming arbitress!" said Danbury—"But, my good fellow, *your* anger is *suspicious*—nay, you *own* the *gaze* was not equal to *that* of former meetings."

The Baronet looked vexed—Lady Bab declared *she* preferred a barouche to *any* other carriage—Lord Quadrige smiled; *he* was of opinion that her Ladyship's approbation went *beyond* the barouche: its *owner* was rich and *dashing*, and her Ladyship had been *remembered* at *three* birth-days, *consequently her* "search *for* a husband" was doubtful.

"It is with infinite pleasure I witness your chagrin," said Lady Townly, addressing Sir Robert; "how obvious it is, that even your most *favourite* pursuits, ungraced by *our* presence, cease to charm!"

"We

"*We* had an immense concourse in the *Square,*" said Danbury; "it was *famous* to see the variety of *classes* assembled:—the *country gentry,* who make their *annual* visits to London, to get *fashions,* and carry home food for rural envy—the *sober* citizens, who will *peep* at the fun, while their *moral* feelings are shocked at the *vastness* of the *expence*—and the dear sweet creatures whom one *knows, smiling* on our *feats,* waving their lily hands, and, with a fund of *discernment,* passing *sentence* on the *style,* trappings, and *architecture* of the carriages."

"Do you *ever* take up *casualties* on the road?" asked Celia, with a smile.

"That's a good one," said Sir Robert; "it reminds me of an excellent joke:—Territ and I were in Berkshire about a month since—we took the whim to *push* off for London—it was past twelve o'clock at night—we ordered our fellows to sound the *horn* as we passed through the towns—in coming through Farringdon, an old woman screamed out of a garret window—

'Is

'Is that the Exeter coach?'—I pulled in; 'And what then?' said I—'There's a good *soul*,' said she; 'do make room for my poor old man; he's going to Lunnon to see Jack; he's listed for a soldier, and I'm afeard he will be gone before his father sees him.'—'I'm full,' says I; 'good night t'ye."

"How cruel!" said Celia.

"Cruel, my dear Madam!" said Sir Robert; "why, if we suffered these sort of things to overtake us, there would be no end to the intrusions."

"Curse me if I could have refused," said Danbury; "the old fellow could not have been very heavy."

"And it would assuredly have *completed* your *assumption* as a *cocher*," said Celia.

"Very well, Miss Delacour, you improve, I perceive," said Lady Bab; "yet this *naïveté* becomes you vastly: but I *must* agree with Sir Robert, that such condescensions would be *derogatory* in *gentlemen coachmen*."

Mr.

Mr. Belford and Lady Desmond were announced—"The very person I was dying to see," said Lady Desmond, addressing our heroine; "are we to congratulate you?—Ah! I see it is true; Mr. Berton *is* the favoured lover."

Celia, while blushing under an association so ill suited to her feelings, in a few words contradicted the report.

"You must not mind what the papers say in *this* respect," said Lady Bab; "I believe they gave *me* to *all* the young men of note when I first came out."

"They have given it *over* some time, Bab," said Mr. Danbury, with a loud laugh.

Her Ladyship coloured, and, with a forced smile, declared there was not such a Hottentot in existence as her brother.

"How are the girls?" said Lady Townly, turning to Lady Desmond; "what are their *present* pursuits? I am always curious in regard to your family, your arrangements

are

are so *judicious*, so unlike *all* the mothers I know."

"You do me honour," replied Lady Desmond; "they are at *present* employed in *charcoal portrait-painting*—it is *innocent* and *amusing*."

"And admirably calculated to improve the *hands*," said Mr. Belford, laughing.

"Will it injure the skin?" said Lady Desmond; "this never occurred to me—Allow me to write a note," she added; "I will *instantly* apprize the girls of their danger."

"I don't know that it is *worse* than *cobbling*," said Mr. Belford, "or *walking* according to modern style."

"Walking! good Heavens!" said Lady Bab, "does walking hurt the *hands*?" and she surveyed her own with *minute* attention.

"It is not the healthful exercise of *walking*," continued Mr. Belford, "to which *my* remark refers; but that Amazonian

swing

swing of the arms, that ungraceful, *unfeminine* movement, *now* so general with women. I declare to you, that from a strict observation of the hand and arm, I am tempted to believe that its beauty is greatly diminished by this vulgar custom; and, with a few exceptions, my *memory establishes* the opinion:—my own mother, and a number of females, whom I remember some twenty years since, were eminently superior in this *distinguishing* mark of delicacy. In fact,

> 'The modest look, the castigated grace,
> The gentle movement, and slow measur'd pace,
> For which her *lovers* died, her parents pray'd,
> *Are indecorous* with the *modern* maid."

"What a provoking creature!" said Lady Townly: "It is really very hard upon us that such idle bachelors are *suffered* in society; while they *appear* the most *insignificant* animals in creation, they are *treasuring* up impertinent satire, as if *their* opinions could be of consequence."

"I shall

"I shall see you and Lady Bab, aye, and Lady Desmond, with all her young *cobblers*," said Belford, "*walking* according to *ancient* custom."

"Never!" said the ladies in a breath. "Nothing so *formal* can be tolerated by women in a certain rank. But allow me to add, thou cynical Aretin," said Lady Townly, "that beside the *illiberality* of your remark, there is something vastly cruel in attacking us poor women.—How do the men walk, I would ask you?"

"They do not *walk*," said Belford; "they *slide*."

"That's a famous go," said Sir Robert; "quiz me if that is not an odd one—pray explain; I like your *gig*."

"Lady Desmond is more competent to *this* definition," said Belford, smiling; "for the defect takes rise in the *shoemaking* department—or rather the *boots*. The women have *wisely* discarded all idea of *artificial* height; and the *men* have taken up the *feminine* vanity. I have more than once felt

felt a *hand* on my shoulder, which, from the *noise* of the *heels,* I had *considered* to be *female;* nay, *once* I turned with grateful rapture—'My dear creature!' says I; and behold it was a colonel in the Guards—'In the name of wonder!' I cried, 'what *boots* have *you* devised for your fantastic toe?'—'They are admirably calculated to give *height,*' said my friend.—'If you were exposed to the fire of the *enemy,*' said I, '*this* remark would do honour to your *courage;* but as I believe *your* field of action to lie in the purlieus of St. James's, I should consider it as of no advantage to any but your bootmaker, while your *neck* is endangered by your *uncertain* footing.'—An old *bachelor's* opinion had no weight," continued Belford; "the fashion is *general,* and will remain so, till some other foolery is invented."

"I must remark on *one* part of your stricture," said Lord Quadrige—"that of imagining that *we* think of height;" and he passed

passed his *fingers* through his hair, agreeable to the "usage of fashion."

"You illustrate the *fact*, while you *reject* the imputation," replied Belford—"I believe it *now* to be a *habit*, which *will* take its course. An 'idle bachelor,' as Lady Townly terms me, may be allowed to use his eyes: I will use mine, because I consider it beneficial to my moral happiness, and a *solace* which the *pity* of the *ladies* should willingly accord to a class of men *existing* under their indifference: but there is scarcely a more *marked* stage of *fashionable* consideration, as applied to *external* appearance, than that *interval* between the *rap* at the *door* and the *admission* of the *prepared* visitor."

Celia smiled; *she* anticipated the explanation, for she had witnessed the exhibition.

Lord Quadrige started from his seat—"Avaunt! I'll hear no more!" said the Peer, in a theatrical attitude—"my brain's on fire."

"You

"You look frightened," said Belford, laughing.

"Pshaw! hang your soliloquy!" said Sir Robert—"Pray, Sir, proceed," addressing Belford.

"Why, when a *modern* beau has announced himself by an *appropriate* rap at the mansions of his *friends*, he uncovers his *head*, ruffles his *hair* '*à la porcupine*,' then tips his hat on his *forehead*, in order to *preserve* that *furieux* appearance so necessary in the present *costume* of the *tête*, and thus enters the drawing-room, *flushed* and *frightened* to the very *climax* of *manly* beauty."

"I declare this is beyond bearing," said Lady Bab—"What can be more beautiful, more captivating, than the crops of the men? You antediluvian beaux, you sigh for *powder*, because *time will* tell tales."

"Time cannot intrude *now* as formerly," said Belford; "at least, if he *presumes*, we can cut him off—*Russian oil* and Bowman's

toupees would give the semblance of *youth*, even to the tyrant himself."

Danbury forced himself to agree with Belford, lest a further *denouement* of *fashionable* aids should be adduced. He wore his whiskers at this moment, with more of *fear* than *valour*.

"I know not how to estimate you, Belford," said Lord Quadrige: "either you are a most illiberal cynic, or really have the *interest* of your sex at heart."

"Then you admit my strictures to be just," said Mr. Belford; "you do me justice in believing me anxious that *man*, *collectively*, should hold his destined rank in society. I admit, that there was a period in which French frippery had gained an ascendency over the men, truly ridiculous; yet even that epoch was not destitute of intellectual emanation—*now* the Roman contour is the fashion; but the Roman *mind*, the attic hoard, where are they? We have *gladiators* and *charioteers*; but then

they

they are *merely bruisers* and *coachmen*. If we see a conspicuous *folly* contrasted by a *virtue* which claims our regard, our esteem, we are naturally disposed to look to the *fair* side; nay, there is in the eccentricities, the *whims* of the young and happy, a something, that while it awakens our fears, demands our *lenient* chastening. The *season* is *short*: if he gains a little *experience* from his sacrifices, it may stand him in good need; but where *all* is *mirth* and *notoriety*, where, when a man *dies*, and his stud and his *carriages* are sold, no vestiges of his *having* been remains, how lamentable is this, how unworthy of men, who have *sipped* from the wisdom and maxims of the ancients! where is your emulation?"

"Do you approve of classical studies for young ladies?" said Lady Desmond, turning to Mr. Belford.

"Women of real taste," said Mr. Belford, "scarcely need direction in this particular. Genius is soaring; and their *delicacy*, like their *judgment*, will lead them to correct decisions.

decisions. But if you mean by *ladies*, school girls, I say no, positively not. Make them useful, *intelligent*, and *moderately* accomplished; but let their *reason* be *matured*, ere they go beyond their depth."

"Then I am right as yet," said Lady Desmond; "but really, since I read *Cœlebs*, nothing but the Stanleys has run in my brain. I have discharged my housekeeper, because she was a fine lady, and have engaged the most complete piece of antiquity you ever beheld; and, to complete my satisfaction, her name is *Nonfit*, instead of Comfit. I have put Maria under *her* care; but she is not quite pleased with her station as yet; and, to my utter plague and astonishment, I have been forced to send for a *writing-master* again, for the girl cannot *calculate* the most trifling bill. That book will do wonders, I pronounce; nay, already *I* have banished all my *little* ones from the dining-room, and have ordered a *mason* and *carpenter* to send down proper materials for erecting a *temple;* and when we go to Woodfield,

Woodfield, I will make the young folks try their skill in raising it *themselves*."

The company smiled; Lady Townly was lavish in her praises of the *plan;* while Belford, with impressive irony, bade her Ladyship beware of raising a *fabric* of the sort—"Human knowledge," said the eloquent satirist, "was, by the erection of a *presumptuous* edifice, *disseminated* in the variety of languages that the dispersion caused; but in the case before us, human *intellect* alone could suffer: yet if a chaos *were* to ensue in that *mind* whose studies are so *multiplied* and *useless*, to whom shall we refer as the primary cause of the wreck? —to the *imaginary artist*," continued Belford. "We *all* feel ourselves *mortal;* yet our *vanity* tempts us to *act* beyond our powers; but forgive me when I add, that the *mothers* of the present day are the most irresolute and credulous creatures in existence; not one of ye reflect on your *own* youth. Folly has made such immense strides, that, in the last *twenty* years, I *believe* that

 we

we have advanced a *century* in absurdities. You are not satisfied to rear amiable, *rational* women—no; you must *astonish* the town. *One* mother gives a *musician* to that temple of their *false* worship, 'the world;' another, 'a cobbler;' a third offers a young philosopher; a fourth, a dear *artless free-thinker*, who, under the character of a *hoyden*, says and does half a thousand things, *distinct* from *innocence*, nay, contrary to morality."

"*O tempora! O mores!*" said Lady Bab —"My good Belford, all this *sounds* vastly well; but *that* book to which Lady Desmond refers *has* said enough on *morality* to last *our* natural term—so change the subject, I beseech you."

"Fie, Lady Bab!" retorted Lady Desmond, "I did not expect this from you."

"Perhaps I shall be a better girl when I have *read* this wonderful publication," said her Ladyship; "but I am as yet little advanced in its pages: I always *reserve* it for *Sunday reading*."

"Horrible!"

"Horrible!" said Lady Desmond; "you shock me—my girls shall not read it yet, because I will not let them into my system; but I anticipate the most delightful treat in their remarks, whenever I shall permit them to do so—and some *surprise* too," she added —"Adieu!—I had almost betrayed myself." And, with a countenance marked with *ambiguous vanity*, her Ladyship retired.

"We shall have a *classical* cobbler and a *sentimental cook*," said Lady Townly, laughing immoderately.

"The *first* is by no means a *rara avis*," said Belford; "but I agree with you—poor Lady Desmond is caught; she is now bent on educating her daughters on the *Stanley* plan."

Celia, to whom the scene was highly amusing, had taken little part in the conversation. The book in question had been read by our heroine: *she* was not qualified by *disposition* or *vanity* to *offer* an opinion; to its *purport* she did ample justice: if she wanted *faith* in its practicableness, it was

not

not so much her hopelessness in *human nature*, as that the plan *might* be made equally *acceptable* to the Supernal Judge, while its *performance* might be more *simple*, less *austere*—"If our presumption leads us to imagine ourselves *inspired*, the *vanity* will not stop *here;* we shall aspire to *convert*, to *teach*," thought Celia; "but if we are the *humble* believers in a *pure* and *revealed* religion—a religion that holds out to the *penitent* the most consoling and benign hope, assuredly that faith must be most perfect, in which *humility* is *conspicuous ;* and the seceder who has *wandered* from the way of *truth*, of virtue, may be 'gently led,' into that path which is opened to all who 'profess themselves Christians;' where He, who, though competent to judge and search *all* hearts, and enlighten such as his wisdom approves, hath forbidden *us* to hold ourselves *vauntingly*, hath commanded *us* not to *judge*, but to be 'meek and lowly,' and thereby we shall attain 'that *peace* which the *world* cannot give."

As

As these reflections passed in the mind of Celia, the mild form of Jessy rose on her imagination; and as she remembered the modest fervency of the youthful sufferer, the touching *humility* of *her* awakened heart, "I saw it," said Celia, mentally—"yes, I saw *hope* tinge a cheek, on which despair had planted *her* roses: yet it was not *enthusiasm;* it was a *grateful,* a modified feeling, *eloquent* in its silence, and perfect in the *humility* of the offering."

We expect these pages, like Lady Bab's moral reservations, will either be deferred to a *Sunday reading*, or *skipped.* Though an author must submit to his fate in *either* case, there is no necessity for *his* or *her* yielding their opinions, selling their consciences. I (as I have before observed) am a positive *antique;* and while I would exhort those who are lenient to my *age,* and read my book, to believe me actuated for their good, rather a *Mentor* than a *censor*, I cannot forbear *wishing* that *human criticism,*

criticism, like *eternal mercy*, was lenient, not prone to make our *burthen heavier* than we can *bear*—the thing is impossible, for the *perception* is too *distinct* to own comparison.

Yet I own my weakness—I tremble before and *anticipate* the fiat of that literary *ordeal*, the '*northern constellation*.' It appears inconsistent to avow, at the same time, that the *decisions* of this phalanx are to *me*, in many cases, the very boundaries to *my* literary research. Their strictures are often severe, yet as often just. Their *praise* is ever *qualified*; and in this is *wisdom*; for vanity would intoxicate the too highly *encouraged* author. But however the remark may hold good, that a —— always *journeys south*, I must believe that his *criticisms* are *due north*. I grant the *latitude* is *great*; but he *certainly* does not *omit* to come into *soundings*, upon every good occasion; and I am tempted to add, before I clear Lady Townly's drawing-room of her

morning

morning visitors, and *close* this chapter, "Oh that *I* had been born *north* of the Tweed!"

"It wad na ha helped ye a bit," says the staunch critic.

I deny that; for though you might have given me '*short-bread;*' ye would have given me *comfits* too.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

> "Love all; trust a few;
> Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy,
> Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend
> Under thy own life's key: be checked for silence,
> But never taxed for speech."

It appears *outré* to name a woman as in "search of a husband," yet the thing is literally true—what takes us from London to Cheltenham, Bath, Brighton, &c. &c. &c.? why, when we take *these* journies, are we solicitous to carry with us specimens of *taste?* the meadows, the springs, or the ocean, will neither admire our *bonnets,* or applaud our *costume;* the *latter* may *reflect* our charms, but a *briny exhalation* is not the essence for which *we* sigh; we are *content* with those *mirrors* which the art of *man* has devised, yet would rather be reflected in a *human* eye than in the

the most *brilliant* French *plate* in the kingdom.

I would not again breathe a sentence applicable to the *enamel* eye, *now* sported as an ornament by the *men*, lest, in *satirizing* a *fashion*, I should wound a *feeling;* yet I cannot forbear one trite remark—how *closely* allied are *fashion* and *deformity!* But my Lord Strangford, in a very beautiful translation from Camoens, swears

"Heaven and hell are wondrous near."

Thus we must believe, that

"Extremes in nature equal ends produce,
In man they work to some mysterious use."

But, with all my foresight as an *antique*, I cannot (and I have given the matter consideration) understand what *lasting* advantages attach to the *gentleman* who is a *coachman*, the *peer* who is a *boxer*, or the *poet* who rises into *fame* by the *prostitution* of his talents. Is the praise, the *admiration* of the day sufficient? if so, I pity ye, for,

for, in spite of *Shepherd's lamps*, ye are miserably in the *dark*. Is it that ye believe the *women* would not estimate you, if ye were merely *enlightened?* Make the attempt—the *risk* would be trifling, the *gain* certain; you are now *suffered*, rather than *esteemed*, in society; and though you seem *content* in *general* flattery, (for, believe me, it is not praise) ye might, it is fully in your power to acquire *an individual* approbation, *indescribably* valuable. I see you smile, but I feel I am in the right. The multitude may dazzle, they may, they *will* sooth you, in the *infancy* of your pursuits; but as *notoriety* is a *puerile* plant, a *scion* of *folly*, which even *exotic* aid cannot *save*, be emulous for *something*: it may be grateful to your *vanities* to be the selected objects of female favour—to be the best dancer, singer, boxer, and coachman of the day; either your declining health, or that *satiety* which follows all frivolous assumptions, will, ere long, open your eyes to the *fallacy*

lacy of the system. I am aware, that to use a *proverb* in *this* age, is considered a *vulgarism*, yet *many* of them are self-evident axioms, which bear *hard* on our follies; for instance, though it would be *impossible* to convince an *encouraged buck* that

"Learning was better than *house* or land,"

it is not improbable, that when

"House and land are gone and spent,"

he will find,

"*Learning* is most excellent."

But the *understanding* will *rust;* and though *incrustations*, as applied to *gems*, may enrapture the *antiquarian*, that precious *gem*, the *human mind*, is never so *brilliant* as when its *polish* is acquired by that action which *intellectual* society produces.

It was now generally known, that Miss Delacour was shortly to leave London. The

The entreaties of Sir Harry to defer it a little longer were ineffectual, till he expressed his wish that Celia would *see*, and judge of, a governess, whom he wished to attain for Rachel. The arrangement was in every point of view desirable. Celia acquiesced, only requesting Sir Harry to delay his inquiries until *she* could write to Hadley. "If my aunt has not already fixed Lucy Goodwin, whom I know she was anxious to place in a family, I should rejoice that *she* had the charge of Rachel— it would be a fortunate coincidence."

Sir Harry was elated at the idea; and our heroine hastened to her sister, to make *her* a party in a concern so important to a *mother*.

Lady Townly was tempted to reject the plan, from no other reason than that *she* had not suggested it. Celia was zealous; and her Ladyship, after some demurs, fell into the scheme.

Celia had been less frequent in her calls on the Bertons since the death of Jessy; her

her esteem for the worthy pair made it impossible to meet *them,* without a strong recurrence to their erring son.

Mr. Berton was more deeply impressed with *virtuous* shame, in his *casual* meetings with Celia, than at any other moment of his restless life; he never voluntarily *came* in her way; yet when he did, if his eyes met her, he was oppressed, even to confusion, while his heart, a convert to her virtues, was more than ever devoted to her.

On the morning to which this chapter of our history bears reference, a note from Lady Berton was presented to Celia; its contents ran as follow:

"Doctor Walton has alarmed us, my dear Celia, by his *confidential* opinion, that our dear George's health requires our care; we have resolved, in consequence, to make a tour with him, and shall set ourselves down in Devon-

shire for a few months, as if from *choice.* We are most anxious to guard our intentions from our beloved child, who laughs at my *solicitude*: how I regret that *you* cannot be our companion! Ah! my dear Celia, will it excite *more* than *compassion* in your bosom when I add, that *you* are the *primary* cause of his anxiety? Forgive me, I *would* not be obliged by your pity, though I am persuaded its *effect* would be most extensive, not only in restoring to tranquillity a heart that is wholly your's, but in blessing the most anxious of parents, and my dear Celia's affectionate friend,

"LYDIA BERTON."

Though Celia was in possession of the more *immediate* cause of Berton's anxiety, she had too just a conception of the misery that must attach to a *man* owning such cause for self-recrimination, not to feel unfeigned concern, on perusing the letter

letter of her friend. She took an early opportunity of answering Lady Berton in person; and while, with genuine candour, she expressed her regrets at the visible uneasiness which tortured their parental hearts, she, with equal simplicity, avowed herself incapable of meeting their wishes.

"I do not press the subject, my dear girl, from any hope in your acquiescence," said Lady Berton; "but I must, I *shall* ever regret that we gave our son up to the dangers of the *world*, when it was so much in our power to bind him to his native shades."

"George was never calculated for retirement," said Sir Peter; "we look back now, my love, because we are *disappointed;* we *have* looked *forward,* for we were full of *hope;* yet, perhaps, we are not doomed to that extent of misery which you so timidly imagine; *this may* prove a happy epoch in the life of our son—his reason is taking *place* of his imagination; he will *now* see the world for what it is, and bless

our age, by becoming the solace of our remaining days."

Celia was sensibly pained as she listened to the venerable Sir Peter. "Alas!" thought our heroine, "if ye knew the errors of this child of your dotage, your *love* might not be diminished, for *nature* is a powerful absolver, but your *hopes* in him must be weakened;" and the mental eye of Celia rested on the couch of the dying Jessy. "I saw the wreck, I witnessed the grievous sufferings of the betrayed woman. I will not, I dare not *judge;* but I will do more—I will hope and believe, that his severe *compunction* will at once mend his heart, and appease the God he has offended."

Our heroine had taken leave of her amiable friends, and, with Richard, was pursuing her way to Portman-square, when, in crossing to Holles-street, she encountered Berton.

"You will allow me to attend you?" said

said Berton; and his cheek was flushed, as if he apprehended a refusal.

Celia assented, and they walked some time in silence.

"I am going to leave London," said Berton, "for a period uncertain; *you* are already so much acquainted with my feelings, so competent to speak of me as I *deserve*, that I forbear to trouble you with any detail, yet I must ask of you a reply to one question—Are you the——? God of Heaven! I cannot," said the agitated Berton; "Celia, I must write to you; bless you, Heaven bless you!" and dropping that arm which his love, as well as pride, had made a distinction highly flattering, he hastily quitted the side of our heroine, and darting down a street, left Celia to sympathize in his internal anguish.

"Am I rigid?" sighed Celia, mentally; "no, from my heart I pity you, Berton; I rejoice in this dawning of honour, this

just sense of your recent defalcations: but what woman of real feeling would trust her *peace* to the keeping of a *libertine?* it may *prove* the vanity of *love* to *believe* that *we* could fix the *heart* hitherto *unprincipled;* but the trembling *inferiority* of a *trusting* woman, the aspiring *gentleness* of a sensitive mind, must meet, in the creature of her choice, either the *idol* of her hopes, her implicit faith, or *certain* disappointment, in her connubial happiness—for here is no medium.

"What a romantic being!" says the *unmarried* reader; "*she* may search, but she will never find a *husband* of this sort—there is not such a man as Cœlebs; and if there was, Miss Delacour is welcome to make him *her* captive, for we *hate* such tame pedants, such *cottage-hunting,* timid lovers."

Now believe me, my fair censors, *I* would not *attempt* to pourtray a Cœlebs; *my* vanity, nor my own *experience* in *la belle passione,* could not draw such a portrait: I would

would rather use my pen to trace a *natural* character; I believe the cause of *morality* to be more faithfully served in offering a *possible* point for our *emulation,* than in any *ideal* perfections that fancy, however sublime, could imagine.

Our heroine had sought her sister, and learned that her Ladyship would return, and take up Miss Delacour, to make a few visits. Celia was making a few items of such presents as she purposed taking with her to Hadley, when the arrival of Patty was announced.

"How is my aunt?" asked Celia, with lively emotion.

"Madam is quite well," said Patty; "here are letters for you, Miss; and my mistress is so fond of the little boy, you can't think."

"I knew he would find a friend," said Celia, receiving her letters from the hand of her servant. "Did you see the villagers?"

"Yes, Miss; and they all crowded round me,

me, to know when you would come home; and old Godfrey quite cried with joy, when I told him you would soon be at Hadley."

"Worthy old man," said our heroine.

"Madam was not so well pleased with me," continued Patty, with downcast eyes; "she says I ought to have consulted *you* before I married; but, indeed, Miss Celia, it was not *my* fault; I begged Donnel to let me tell *you*, but he said——;" and here Patty paused.

"What did he say?" asked Celia, with an encouraging smile.

"Why, Miss, I know you will excuse him, because he did not know your character; he said, that country ladies were over *nice*, and would sooner *all* their servants died old *maids* and *old bachelors*, because they got their services so *cheap*; and always held up *town* servants as so *wicked*, that they might frighten the pretty girls from marrying."

Celia looked with compassion on the credulous

credulous Patty; and while her discernment led her to conclude Mr. Donnel a finished *London* servant, she wisely forbore any remark, for Patty had found a husband.

The letters of Mrs. Mansfield were in her usual strain of eloquent tenderness; she rejoiced in the approaching meeting, promised Celia an agreeable surprise, thanked her for having sent the little orphan to her care; and concluded by saying, that the family of Mr. Walsford had taken charge of Lucy Goodwin, who would be in London in a few weeks. "Tell Fanny," said Mrs. Mansfield, in the close of her letter, "that I wish *her* to receive my young *protegé*, till she attains a situation. I could have wished that *you* had superintended a decision so important to a youthful adventurer; but your sister must act for me, as I cannot bring myself to bear a longer separation from my Celia. Lucy will not make any *final* engagement without

out *my* concurrence. I *wish* that Fanny could see her as I do, and retain her in her own family."

Celia owned grateful delight in this request of her beloved relative; it proved the similarity of their sentiments; and the arrangement having gained the assent of Lady Townly, she was at ease with regard to the infant Rachel, whose glowing mind, thus suffered to expand, in the society of an amiable and unaffected young woman, would, she trusted, prove an ornament to her rank, and a comfort to her parents.

"But what is the surprise I am to meet?" asked Celia, with all the curiosity of her sex; "I cannot imagine—the Bertons and the Walsfords having quitted Hadley, I am at a loss to conjecture." A second thought chased the *aristocratic* reflection—"May it not be a village annal?" thought our heroine. "The short and simple annals of the poor are highly interesting; yes, my dear aunt has been active in effecting some *new* happiness amongst her dependants,

ants, and she anticipates the delight with which I shall share her feelings."

The return of the carriage warned Celia to join her sister.

"I hope you are in good spirits," said Lady Townly, as our heroine entered the barouche. "I am going to Desmond's, to *row* her—exactly as we suggested, she is seeking a *tutor* for her daughter: but listen, Celia; here is the convincing proof;" and her Ladyship read from the body of the Times the following paragraph:—

"Wanted, in a family of fashion, a *confidential* person to teach the classics to a young lady; such a one, bringing credentials of his ability, character, &c. may apply at ——, York-street, St. James's."

"But how can you be certain it is Lady Desmond who inserts this?" asked Celia.

"I would vouch for its being her," said Lady Townly; "the reference is in her neighbourhood; but *previous* to an *investigation*, we may endeavour to *gain* all the *proofs* we can; so, *sans ceremonie*, I will

first

first go to the shop, sound the *people*, and if Desmond should *tax* me with *underhand information*, I can *forget* I have been at the *shop*, you know—*such* things are *now* sanctioned; and I should not wonder if *I* was to get gold *boxes* from *half* a thousand mamas who are not in the *classical* party."

Celia was compelled to smile at the whimsical *badinage* of her sister; yet she took occasion to mention the purport of her aunt's letter, to which Lady Townly gave more than usual attention.

"I believe the plan to be excellent," said her Ladyship; "and I am truly glad, that for *once* I have the power to please aunt Martha and gratify myself; yet believe me, Celia, if I did not know that the *system* which will be adopted with Rachel is out of the *usual* track, somewhat *eccentric*, I could not have assented. Forgive me, I see your grave phiz with due reverence: but Rachel is my daughter—I would not present *her* to the world an

every-

every-day Miss—the thing is impossible: but I am really contented in the plan; and Harry will be so grateful for my condescension, that I expect a *liberal* fee for my dutiful submission."

The carriage stopped at a pamphlet-shop. "I wish to recommend a person to the situation advertised this morning," said Lady Townly to the man who attended.

"If you will give *me* the gentleman's address, Madam, I will forward it," said the man.

"My friend would not submit to this," said her Ladyship, with easy effrontery; "but bring me some visiting-tickets and card-cases to look at."

The shopkeeper hastened to obey her order.

Selecting a quantity of each, she drew her purse—"Now the *name* of the family advertising," she continued.

The man paused—the *money* was ready, and

and his promise of secrecy was forgotten. "Lady Desmond, Madam," said the yielding trader.

Her Ladyship smiled graciously, and in a few minutes the ladies were admitted in St. James's-square.

If Celia had owned astonishment in her *former* visits, the *present* was not calculated to diminish the feeling. Lady Desmond, with a pile of folio volumes, was leaning on a large table; her elder daughter, with a countenance, serious even to melancholy, was poring over a Latin grammar; while Maria, a tall, healthy-looking girl, in a bib and apron, was explaining the component ingredients of a *plumb-pudding*.

"Ah! my dear friends," said Lady Desmond, "grant me *one* minute, and I am your's."

The ladies bowed acquiescence.

"Tell Mrs. Nonfit," continued her Ladyship, "that I am greatly pleased with your improvement: but be careful of your

hands,

hands, Maria; and when you have seen the *pudding mixed*, be sure you *order* Fenning to attend to your toilet; use plenty of *almond*-paste and *rose-water*; for though I am anxious to have you a *housekeeper*, the *degrading* assumption must not transpire: *perhaps* we may, at *some distant* period, find it necessary to *divulge* the fact; but at *present*, be uniformly secret. Can you decline that noun?" added her Ladyship, turning to her elder daughter.

"I would willingly *decline* the lesson," said Miss Desmond, poutingly.

"I blush for you, Miss Desmond," said the mortified mother; "tame, *unlettered* girl, you cannot discern my plan, or you would need no philippic to attain the *elevated* pursuit. Go, Madam, retire to your chamber; Maria is dutiful."

The weeping girl withdrew; and Celia, whose disgust to the mother was only equalled by her pity for the daughter, saw her departure with compassionate interest.

"My

"My dear Townly," said Lady Desmond, "*your* sagacity will elucidate my little plan—have not I made immense advances lately?"

Lady Townly pretended ignorance, for she delighted in making the ridiculous more prominent.

"Yes, my dear friend, Miss Desmond *is* to be the *Lucilla* of my family; I have been ransacking the library this morning, and have collected all these volumes already; and in order not to lose time, I have begun with the grammar myself."

"Why not engage a tutor?" said Lady Townly, archly.

"Great wits jump," said Lady Desmond; "I have actually advertised *for* one. Well, I shall *now* feel doubly *satisfied* in my arrangement—*your* opinion is of great value with me."

"Have you a *Cœlebs* in your eye?" asked Lady Townly, with saucy freedom.

"Further this deponent sayeth not," replied the speculating hostess; "no, my dear

dear creature, even to *you* I cannot be explicit."

"How cruel!" said Lady Townly; "you know I *am* married, and Miss Delacour is so romantic, that *her* 'search of a husband' will be the *phantom* to sooth her declining days; nay, *she* is going to rusticate with the fawns and dryads at Hadley; so you have nothing to *fear* from that quarter."

"Excuse me," said Lady Desmond, "not yet, my dear Townly—But I am immensely sorry that you think of leaving us, Miss Delacour; the beaux will languish—Have you heard what an accession of fortune Ernmore has got?" she continued; "really it is preposterous to see Frost *chaperoning* that young man as she does; he is an elegant scholar, I understand; his poetry is considered highly *classical;* he has wonderful genius—he has invented a *coal scuttle,* on a plan so *unique,* that a *model* has been *cast* from the *design.*"

"Ernmore will *never* marry Miss Frost,"

 said

said Lady Townly; "he is not a young man, to be *led* into a scheme of the sort—he appears *quiescent* at *present*, but it is only till he *can* act for himself."

"You think so—well, *that* is exactly my opinion," said the speculating mother. "I rather think *his* feelings are lively; he might be *surprised* into *love*, but not *teazed* into a weak compliance."

"Exactly so," retorted Lady Townly; "a woman of enlarged mind—in fact, a *learned* woman, might make him her *willing* slave."

Lady Desmond smiled ambiguously; and Celia drew from the silly mother, that Lord Ernmore was her Ladyship's *Cœlebs* in embryo.

The arrival of Mr. Belford was announced—"Where are the cobblers?" said he, looking round; "ah! a metamorphosis; the *stall* is broke up, I perceive—a book-stand!" and he advanced to the table, and turned the volumes over. "Latin is the order

order of the day," said Belford; "are these laid out for *sale?* or are they *likely* to be *used?*"

"I would not have *him* know for the world," said Lady Desmond, in a half-whisper, "he is so severe—They came in my way this morning," continued her Ladyship; "and I have always a *melancholy* pleasure in looking into such books as my Lord approved."

Celia blushed—to her there was something *truly* melancholy, in thus calling the name of a deceased husband forward—nay, the assertion was a palpable falsehood.

Lady Townly was projecting some way of eliciting the *secret*, when, just as her active fancy had suggested a mode, a servant announced a stranger, who came from Mr. ———, in York-street.

Lady Desmond started from her seat—"Not here!" said she; "shew him into my *boudoir*."

It was too late—the candidate was already in the room. Her Ladyship now,

 accord-

according to the "usage of society," referred to her eye-glass; and, while she surveyed the young man with deep attention, the words—"Oh! you are the person from Mr. ———; I hope you can bring good recommendations?"

The young man blushed—it was a blush which Celia translated as one of honest pride, at being addressed so cavalierly, and in company.

"If your Ladyship is engaged," said the stranger, "I can call again."

"No, I will settle the matter at once; there is no *time* to be lost;" and, asking leave of her visitors, her Ladyship withdrew with the stranger.

"He is very young for a tutor," said Lady Townly. "*Mon Dieu!* I have betrayed the secret; poor Desmond!—Belford, let me beseech of you not to say *I* named it."

"Make yourself easy," said Belford; "*she* will give us the fact, soon as she returns. So the young man, now closeted

with

with this weathercock mother, is to be the tutor of Miss Desmond? The *result* may be easily foreseen; and if he is *amiable*, she may be happy it ends so well."

"What do you think of that person?" asked Lady Desmond, as she rejoined her company; "I like his appearance; there is something gentlemanly in his figure and manner—and he is *poor*, for he came into my terms instantly."

"That is as it should be," said Lady Townly, "for when one *employs* a person in these situations, it is indispensible that they should feel *some* sort of inferiority—for nothing is so mortifying as that *pride* which a *pedant* assumes."

"Or, rather, nothing wounds the self-sufficient so much, as being *compelled* to *admire* those on whom fortune has frowned," said Belford. "I am half offended with *you*," he continued, addressing Lady Desmond; "you are resolved on giving a *classical* finish to your girls, though you in *part* agreed with me yesterday."

"My dear Sir," said Lady Desmond, "the impulse is *irresistible* with me at this moment; the *Stanley family* haunt me day and night—I dream of that *beautiful cottage* scene—I behold Mrs. Carlton working the reformation in her husband, and ——"

"And you wish *you* had a husband to comfort," said Belford, laughing.

"Fie upon you, Mr. Belford; this levity is unpardonable," said her Ladyship. "But my dear Townly, forgive me when I candidly avow, I see a strong likeness between Miss *Sparkes* and Cardonnel—nay, now don't be angry—Cardonnel was never a favourite of *mine*—*apropo*, what excessively *odd* things they say of her just now!"

"Cardonnel is an amiable lively creature," replied Lady Townly; "and, like all young and handsome *widows*, must expect envy, hatred, and malice; she is as much above their attacks, as their vain imitations—really I am very angry with you—

you—Miss Sparkes! good Heavens! there is not the *smallest* similarity."

"Well, I declare I was vastly *sorry* to hear it; but at Lady Mump's last night, it was whispered that Bridoon is *her* shadow —that poor Lady Bridoon is totally *neglected*—nay, more, that Cardonnel has *established* card-parties at *her* house, and actually fitted up a *billiard*-room, expressly for the purpose of detaining Bridoon, who is *known* to prefer the pastime."

"This is not *scandal*," said Belford.

"*Pardonnez moi*, my dear Sir; no, positively I deny the intent—*I* only *speak* what I *heard;* and, as I before observed, was *much* grieved at the information."

"Yet *you* have *disseminated* the cruel tale," replied Belford. "Lady Townly, if she was not, as she has avowed, *attached* to Lady Cardonnel, might extend it yet further—thus ruining the fair name of woman on mere report, a *rout-whisper*, the very mockery of common sense."

"I can *depend* upon my friend, Lady

Townly," said the artful slanderer; "my dear creature, *you* will not breathe a *sentence* on the subject—if it *is* true, we shall *all* hear it in a short time—*aprepo,* Hayman is found out at last."

"Some new miserly invention, I will vouch," said Lady Townly. "I hate the creature, she has such an *unmerciful* appetite when she dines in *company.*"

Celia regarded her sister with fearful expectation; she laid her hand on the arm of Lady Townly, as if to check her eloquence.

"My conscientious little prude," said her Ladyship, "Hayman is my aversion; it was her whom I quizzed about the Argyle Rooms—the creature absolutely is a pauper—she *lives* upon the public."

"You shall hear," rejoined Lady Desmond. "I went to the *Repository,* in the Haymarket, yesterday; Hayman's carriage was waiting. Upon going into the room, she was in the *act* of *settling* with the conductor, for some things that *had* been *sold;*

sold; I stepped up unperceived—' Why did not *this* sell?' said she—it was a *paste-board tidy*. ' The ladies said there was a *defect* in it, Ma'am,' said the woman; ' it is a little soiled by ink, if you observe.' ' Aye, a mere trifle,' said Hayman; ' sell it for *half* price—the *poor woman* who makes them is in *great* distress, and *I* am very *anxious* to get *all* I can for her.' Now I," continued Lady Desmond, " was *witness* to this same accident of the tidy—it occurred, from the *epicure's* haste to write an apology for not going to *one* dinner, because *another* of a more *luxurious* sort had offered—thus *I* was qualified to judge, *ipso facto*. I put my head over her shoulder—' A very pretty box that,' says I. —' Ah! how are you? how are you?' said she, and she dragged me to the other end of the room, and began such a desultory conversation, that I was forced to yield my first intention of quizzing her. I determined, however, to see her out, and ques-

tion

tion the woman—whether she saw my purpose, I cannot say, but she soon retired.

'That lady,' says I, addressing the woman, 'is a very *liberal* patron of the poor —don't you find her so?'

'Why, indeed, Ma'am, I don't know *what* to think of that lady,' said the woman; 'she is so exorbitant in what she expects for the works that *she* brings, that the Lady *visitors* are quite frightened when I shew them—and as to *worked handkerchiefs, she* has made them quite a *drug*—I believe I have sold two or three dozen for her—but, to be sure, she says that the *poor family* who work them are in great distress, and have a great many girls, so they make quick work, no doubt.'

"This was all I wanted; and I now perfectly comprehended *why* she employs all her young friends to work habit-shirts, &c. for her—what a cunning old speculist it is!"

Our heroine felt all the disgust that a male-

malevolence so pointed could induce; even *admitting* that the calumniated was exactly the person described, there was so little of Christian charity in the elucidation, so evident a pleasure marked the manner of the elated tattler, that Celia, whose countenance did justice to her feelings, regarded her Ladyship with a look of calm displeasure.

Lady Townly enjoyed the *denouement*, and united with her *classical* friend, in deprecating the *old cheat*—" You have done an *essential* good to society," said her Ladyship; " I thank you, in the name of half a thousand of *my* friends, who, I *know*, will see the matter in a just point of view."

" Poor Hayman !" said Belford, " I pity her from my soul—she is in bad hands; nor can *I* attach the *least* fault to her *intentions* in all you have related. In the first place, if she *employed* her young friends in *innocent needle-work*, in place of making them a party in a round of *morning visits*,

I have

I have *just* learned enough to know, that their *principles*, and their *delicacy*, may be spared, in the *fortunate* exclusion; and if she has entered on the life of a gambler (a thing generally known), we are *all* apprised that such a *character* is not *supported* by *honourable means*—she could not face her *friends* and *enemies* at a card-table with an empty purse—which of you would *trust* her?"

"Not I," said Lady Desmond and her friend, in a breath.

"Seriously, then," said Mr. Belford, "to drop all hyperbole, she is wrong, inasmuch as she overstocks the *market*, and, by pretending to serve the *poor*, receives what is their due—it is *contemptible* as a deception—yet I cannot think her less delicate than the woman who, to fill her purse, traffics with a *Jew*, or shares the *hoard* of the *candlestick* with her *butler*."

"She is a *petty* peculator," said Lady Townly; "do not defend her, Belford—I could forgive the woman who does things

with

with a *dash*—but she is the meanest of the mean."

Belford shook his head, while Celia appeared impatient to take leave.

Lady Townly arose—"I wish you success with *your* Lucilla," said her Ladyship, with a smile; "adieu."

Celia made this her parting visit; and the fashionable hostess, following to the gallery, was profuse in her expressions of regret, at the immense despair those persons must sustain, who had been honoured by the acquaintance of Miss Delacour.

"What an illiberal, ungenerous woman!" said Celia, as she took a seat in the carriage; "I thought her, till *this* morning, simply *ridiculous;* but so much of cruelty has shewn itself this day, that I am persuaded *you* will see the necessity of dropping this woman's acquaintance."

"Why, in fact, Celia," said Lady Townly, "though I *defended* Cardonnel, I believe the report to be well-founded. I know

know that poor Car *was* much *involved*; and, in the one or two last calls I made, there was certainly a visible alteration in her *establishment*—and I am well assured, that nothing but *poverty* made Bridoon marry old Snowdon; thus you see the *scandal*, as you call it, wears a most suspicious face."

"Then *you* will not visit Lady Cardonnel?" said our heroine.

"There again you are too precipitate, my dear moral Celia; I have the greatest esteem for Cardonnel, she is a charming companion, and her *house* is highly attractive—*I* must not cast the first stone; no, we must let the matter rest a little while—if I were to drop her, numbers would follow the example—and really, when one considers a little, there is much to be said on both sides."

"Fanny, this is beyond your usual *gaieté*," said our heroine; "if you thus cease to respect *yourself*, what countenance

nance can you expect from others, from those by whom it is honourable to be esteemed?"

"In this is the chief advantage of *rank*," said her Ladyship; "the world is *slow* to credit the defalcations of its superiors, while they can pay the *price* of its *forbearance*; but then, the least semblance of *poverty* undraws the veil, and the most presuming satire is levelled at us; thus, you perceive, it is dangerous to give the rabble any licence. I dare say Cardonnel, who does not want address, will act with caution; and, indeed, I consider her as very unfortunate in having fallen into Desmond's hands, who, with all her matron airs, was by no means insensible to the fine person of Bridoon."

"*Le monde est le livre des femmes*, according to Rosseau," said Celia; "I must in future term it a most incongruous volume; not a *chapter* on which my eyes have rested in this my visit to London, that does not offer *some* cause for regret—

 I wish

I wish it could be put into a new *edition*—either the style is bad, or my *taste* defective, for the *pages* to me appear any thing but the *book of women*."

Lady Townly laughed at the young moralist; but in maintaining her opinions, left Celia little to hope, as to *her* adding one *page* to this *copious* volume, worthy of record.

If a fashionable reader looks into *our* book, they will own with the author, that nothing we could offer as a *novelty* could surprise them; as such, we will not lead them through a further gauntlet of morning visits, such as *they make* every day; the thing has been done a thousand times; we would rather leave them to strike out something *new*, that shall afford *them pleasure*, and give us a *future* opportunity of paying our respects to them—and if a *sceptic* in the *ways* of society should have travelled thus far with us, they will *allow* that we have said *more* than they can *believe*, and ignorance in such a case is bliss; for

for to believe the world *exactly* what it is, is to lower human nature *more* than poor human nature could bear.

In the course of a few days, Celia saw the Bertons depart on their tour: to a laconic note of Mr. Berton's, which asked the simple question, whether Celia protected *his* child? our heroine returned an answer, which, while it calmed his feelings as a *father*, wrung his bosom with anguish unutterable.

He had believed, from the interest which Belford had taken in his victim, and from some enquiries *he* had made of Jessy's servant, that the lady who had taken charge of the child was Mrs. Welgrave. He had sought this amiable woman, and, with appropriate delicacy, reverted to the circumstance; *she* appeared wholly ignorant on the subject; and it then occurred to him, that Celia was the protectress of his deserted infant.

"God of Heaven!" said the self-con-

demned libertine, "this is *retributive* justice; *where* I would *die* to wear the smiles of a woman, I must be hated—while *she*, who for *me* abandoned her parents, her home, and her innocence—*she*, my murdered, my virtuous Jessy, I abandoned, *left* to die, for having *believed* me virtuous."

These sentiments, we will allow, are more those of a *misled*, than a *naturally* depraved heart, and, with these feelings, we will leave him.

Sir Harry prepared to accompany our heroine to Hadley. Lady Townly saw the arrangement, with a dejection for which *she* could give no name. But Belford, whose passion was that of reason, was a prey to that anguish, which his confidence in the stability of Celia made irrevocable—on the morning of her departure, he waited to attend her to the carriage—"I shall see you, my sweet friend," said Belford, "for I have a visit to make in your neighbourhood, but not yet."

Celia,

Celia, with unfeigned pleasure, expressed herself anxious to introduce him to her aunt—" You will esteem her," said Celia; " she is the very woman to please you."

" I know she is; I feel she is," said Belford; " for *she* formed that *mind* which I have contemplated with delight, and shall *remember*, with vain regrets—I shall never meet another Celia."

" Look around you," said our heroine, " and give me a new friend."

" Never!" said Belford; " you have turned *manager here*, Celia—you did not cast my *character*, but you have made my *fate*—Wear these," he continued, clasping a pair of gold bracelets on the arms of our heroine; " these, Celia, encircle your *arms*—your *heart* will not *always* remain *free—I* know *your* fate; but remember Belford as a friend—God bless you!"

Celia, in a voice tremulous from emotion, made a sincere response. Patty gaz-

ed after the carriage in profound meditation; and though *she* was left in the care of a *husband*, the moment that took our heroine from her sight, seemed to leave *her* alone in the world.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"————————not a breeze
Flies o'er the meadow; not a cloud imbibes
The setting sun's effulgence; not a strain
From all the tenants of the warbling shade
Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
Fresh pleasure, unreproved: nor thence partakes
Fresh pleasure only; for th' attentive mind,
By this harmonious action on her powers,
Becomes herself harmonious."————

The Baronet was strenuous in his praise of Belford during their journey; Celia did justice to the virtues of her friend—"I esteem him," said Celia; "I value his opinions, and am proud to know myself esteemed by him. I can never forget Fanny's whimsical explanation of my 'search of a husband;' how would she laugh at me, could she hear me avow,

that a man *less* versed in the *world*, a man, in fact, whose sentiments were less strict, less discerning than Belford, would, with *me*, own a charm infinitely superior. I feel this to be a weak argument in favour of *my discernment*; but so it is, and I cannot reject the *ideal* being whom my *fancy* has pourtrayed; it will end in a chimera, and Fanny will have her revenge."

Sir Harry desisted from further importunity; and ere evening had closed, Celia was folded to the heart of the affectionate Mrs. Mansfield.

The lover of *Nature* owns a tranquillity, in a reunion with those scenes in which their *youth* has expanded, that language must fail in depicting; and though, while Sir Harry remained, Celia was mindful not to wound his feelings, by looking back with *regret* on those hours *she* had devoted to a town-life, the harmony of her spirits, that unrestrained action of the mind, which elicits the most attractive graces in the performance of *simple duties* (not only

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impracticable, but *unimpelled* in London), were to the Baronet strong proofs, that assured him Celia was formed for retired life.

Most happily would *he* have drawn his happiness within its sphere; it was now too late to make a *perfect* system of domestic happiness, with a woman like Lady Townly; yet he was projecting a *partial* plan, from which he was prone to *hope* some comfort. Sir Harry, after a few days, departed, and our heroine again entered on her grateful task of village visits. The little George, now able to walk with help, used frequently to share in her rambles; Mrs. Mansfield had given the tear of sympathy to his mother's fate; and with sincere concern, lamented the moral defection of Mr. Berton, for whose parents the liveliest feelings of a generous mind were excited—" It is a fearful thing to trust a young man to his own ways," said Mrs. Mansfield; " the impressions of early education are, in *some* minds, easily effaced;

George

George was always volatile, but I did not think him vicious—poor Lydia! I dread *her* knowing the extent of his errors. This dear boy claims, at the hands of his father, a *rank* in society—that stigma which attaches to illegitimate birth, is more injurious to boys than girls; a female may in *time* lose that *name* which *friendship* or *policy* has *given* her, but a boy remains an *indecisive*, if not a *rejected* being in society: yes, Celia, however distressing it may prove, we shall not have perfected our part for the child, till we attain for him the acknowledgement of his *natural* relations; he wants *nothing* in point of pecuniary aid—but the *ties* of nature outweigh all sordid considerations, and we must devise some lenient way of effecting this desirable object."

Celia united in the benevolent purpose of her aunt, and promised her assistance (which, from her knowledge of the youthful mother, was important), whenever *occasion* should justify the attempt.

Celia

Celia had seen and been recognized by the villagers; had made old Godfrey happy, by commencing her former habit of reading to him; in short, had been active, as youth, innocence, and a benevolent heart could make her. The promised *surprise* recurred to her memory, and she fled from the garden in which she had been walking, to ask an explanation.

"Curiosity, my dear Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield, smiling, "it was always attributed to our sex, and, I believe, with some justice."

"*Mine* has slumbered a little," said Celia, "for it never occurred to me till now."

"Well, I will satisfy you," said Mrs. Mansfield; "reach me my cloak, Celia, and we will walk."

They passed through the village to a house called "the Lodge;" it had not been inhabited for some years. Celia saw with surprise that it not only wore the appearance of comfort, but elegance; the garden was in order; and though it was now

the

the early part of August, Nature, ever gracious, decked the fair parterre with many a blooming ornament of her bounty.

"Who lives here?" asked our heroine.

Mrs. Mansfield entered the garden, and before they reached the house, three children, whose blooming countenances bore the liveliest testimony of infantine beauty and health, issued from the opened door, and clung to the side of Mrs Mansfield—"How is Harriet to-day?" said Mrs. Mansfield.

"Quite well," said the elder child, a boy, "and here is a letter from papa;" and he drew the letter from his bosom, with a manly air, and gave it to Mrs. Mansfield.

"What a fine family!" said Celia, and she made advances to the two girls, who, with sweet timidity, blushed and smiled; and, at last, looking up in her face, asked, "Are you Celia?"

"Yes, I am Celia; and who are you, my little dears?"

"We

"We are Emma and Julia," said the younger of the two, who, urged by her elder sister, ventured to be eloquent.

The ladies entered the house, when an elderly woman, apparently a superior sort of domestic, with *her* immediate charge in her arms, advanced, and, with respectful attention, ushered them to a parlour—"The young gentleman has shewn you the letter, Madam?" said the nurse.

Mrs. Mansfield referred to the letter; and Celia, while her aunt was engaged in its perusal, was *yet* under the influence of curiosity. There was, in the furniture, books, and drawings, a disposition of elegance, that claimed *her* approbation; she had so recently quitted a *fashionable* mansion, or rather those *repositories* for *furniture*, now known by the name of *drawing-rooms*, where one's elbows are *continually* in danger of demolishing the *pasteboard* structure, that the comfortable idea of *room* and *ease*, now presented to her, appeared infinitely attractive.

"Your

"Your papa will be home in a few days," said Mrs. Mansfield, as she returned the letter to the little boy.

"Yes," said Edward, "and *I* am to bring him to the manor-house."

"We shall be very happy to see him," replied Mrs. Mansfield; "but you will go home with me to-day, and your sisters will go likewise—Miss Delacour wants to be acquainted with my little friends."

The children fled to get their walking dresses; and Mrs. Mansfield, now addressing the nurse, bade her, when she wrote to her master, assure him that Miss Harriet was perfectly well, and that *she*, if any relapse occurred, would apprize him of it. Robson promised to observe her commands. "Yet I wish my Lord was here," continued the nurse, "for master Edward is so dull of an evening; you see, Ma'am, he is so sensible, that one cannot amuse him like other children; and last night, after the young ladies were in bed, I found him crying here; and when I asked him what

what ailed him, he almost broke my heart by what he said."

"Dear boy!" said Mrs. Mansfield, "he is a very intelligent child; but I hope we shall be able to raise his spirits now—my niece will unite in the attempt; *she* is a better walker than I am, and will have equal pleasure in mixing with your sweet little family."

"You are very good, Ma'am," said Robson; "and I am sure my Lord will thank you as you deserve."

The children, equipped for their walk, now entered the room, and the party repaired to the manor-house.

"Those dear little creatures," said Mrs. Mansfield to our heroine, "are the children of Lord Ellincourt; their cruel mother has abandoned them, and their father, whose health I learn is much injured, placed them at the Lodge about a month since. I never saw my Lord—he was called from this soon after he had settled his family; and a slight attack of the rheumatism made me for

some

some days a stranger to my new neighbours. Robson, the worthy woman whom you saw, dispatched a servant to the manor-house one morning, to ask what medical man I would recommend, to see a child who was suddenly taken ill. I named Anderson, and took an airing to the Lodge in the evening. The anxiety of the good Robson, and that interest which the sweet little strangers excited in my bosom, from the moment of meeting them, made me take an active part in their welfare. Robson was discreet, yet I thought somewhat ambiguous in her expressions. I grew into an intimacy with the children, which has proved a delightful solace to many hours, which your absence, my Celia, has deduced from the happiness of greatly. The convalescence of the child soon tranquillized the fears of Robson—she had written to her master, stating the illness of Harriet; but as I gathered from the zealous nurse that he was away on business of importance, and saw no reason for alarm-

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ing him, I deputed her to convey my sentiments on the subject, and offered my services on such points as his worthy confident should deem necessary. The reply of Lord Ellincourt was exactly what we would expect from a fond father: he has written me once or twice since, and in the letters he addresses to his son, makes my poor interference so conspicuous, that I am prepared to meet, in this dishonoured husband, all the qualities that grace a superior mind, with, I fear, too much of the *sensibilities* of the heart, not to be, in *his* situation, a very miserable man."

"I have seen Lord Ellincourt once," said Celia, "and am acquainted with a lady who is related to him;" and she sketched the character of Mrs. Welgrave, with all the warmth of her heart. "Fanny knew Lady Ellincourt, *now* Lady Milner," continued Celia, "whom I believe to be as wretched in her present union, as she *was* happy in her *former*. Good Heavens! how

could a woman leave these dear babes!—what must be her reflections!"

"Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield, as they entered the hall of the manor-house, "the mother of that boy," pointing to little George, "was the victim of man; but a *married* child of error is her *own* victim—no reasoning can palliate an immorality so gross; and it is *merciful* to hope, that Lady Ellincourt's *reflections* are *deeply* compunctuous, for *her* crime is a blemish that *repentance* alone can sooth, as applied to *herself*, and to her *sex* she owes *something*—*every* female wanderer from the path of virtue casts a *shade* upon her *sex*. I cannot believe that man would judge *collectively* from the *vices* of a *few*; but the class is *lowered* in its rank, the conscious pride of *innocence* is humbled—we may feel strong in our *own* principles, for chastity is *proud*.

"She that has that, is clad in complete steel,"

and her loftiness is her armour—it is on

man

man that errors of *this* sort illustrate their baneful influence; their *manners* become *corrupt*, they mock the ordinances of Heaven, and that *chastened* homage, which the woman of *honour* might claim, is *weakened*—they approach her with boldness—she *may* be virtuous, but they recollect *those* in *her* rank who were *not thought* so—she *may* be *worthy* of an *honourable* passion, but she might *not* be *insensible* to *one* bearing no such distinction. Thus the woman of *delicacy* is a *transient* sacrifice to the *crimes* of her *unprincipled equal* in society."

Celia owned the justice of these sentiments, for she had heard Lady Ellincourt *defended*, and that error which cast her from all her natural ties, spoken of with levity—*she* was pitied, while Jessy was left to die—"How perverted are the rules of good order, of civil society! I remember even Berton and Belford were *alarmed*, lest *I* should be *seen* in visiting the deserted Jessy; while Lady Ellincourt, under a

new name, is *received* in circles bearing the name of honourable."

The children of the deceived Ellincourt soon became dear to our heroine—they were already acquainted with her from report.

The ornaments, such as drawings, screens, and maps, which decorated the manor-house, were the works of her hands. They had learned to ask if "Celia did this? if Celia did that?" Mrs. Mansfield had taken pleasure in making them familiar, in idea, and the appearance of our heroine perfected their delight.

She would play with and *instruct* them, by some well-devised amusement; the infantine disputes, from which few children are exempt, were settled by her opinion—and Edward, now in his eighth year, would walk from the Lodge to the manor-house every morning, to meet Celia in the plantations. *Memory* is a quality by no means *specific*—if we are *accurate* in one recollection, it is as certain we may be

correct

correct in another. Thus Celia *remembered* the words of Mrs. Welgrave, as applied to *herself,* and bearing *reference* to Lord Ellincourt. The parting words of Belford added an *imperfect* link; and she *recollected* having *seen* Lord Ellincourt *once* well; and women are allowed to possess quick *observation*—and *some* say, that their *observation* helps them more than their *reading.* We leave that to *casuists* in the ways of women—but if Celia had been pressed for an *opinion,* she would have answered, that *her* observation of that speaking volume, the human countenance, was capable, in *this* instance, of a most *copious* translation. "His face was pallid, yet interesting," thought Celia; "and that sorrow which dimmed the lustre of his youth, seemed the passport to esteem, to compassion."

"Pity is akin to love," says my readers; "what a romantic creature! what a chimera! to love a man with whom she never spoke! Now I, with due humility be it

 spoken,

spoken, have *often* wondered how, *after* having conversed with *some* men, you *could love* them; and must therefore decide in *favour* of the woman who woos the *chimera,* not knowing the *man,* rather than her, who, *knowing* the *man,* suffers the chimerical *imposition.*"

"Did your mama die?" said Edward, one morning, as he joined Celia in the garden. Celia replied in the affirmative. "Then she is gone to Heaven?" said the child; "but *my* mama *left* us—will *she* go to Heaven?"

Celia paused—the answer required caution—"God is very good, very merciful," said Celia; "and your mama will beg him to receive her, and he always listens to our prayers."

"I know that," said the young believer; "for when Harriet was sick, I prayed to God, that if mama *could* not *come* to us, he would send somebody else to take care of us—and he did, for Mrs. Mansfield came the next day."

Our

Our heroine, while tears streamed down her cheeks, clasped the sweet boy to her bosom—"You are very wise, my dear Edward," said Celia; "God loves those who pray to him—but you must remember, that he expects us not to forget *him* at *any* time—you must never *omit* to ask his favour, or he will not heed you, when you want it most."

"Then mama *forgot* to say her prayers," replied Edward; "for when I asked papa why she did not come home, he said she had forgotten *him*, and me, and all of us, and God too; so, I suppose, she did not say her prayers every night, and God was offended with her. Don't you think so?"

"We cannot know exactly what is the will of God," said Celia; "we must be obedient to his pleasure, and he will take care of us."

"But I wish she would come home again," continued the child, "for we used to be so happy, and papa did not cry then, and we were allowed to go down to

the dessert, and play in the drawing-room *sometimes* of an evening; but now papa comes into the nursery, and kisses Emma and Julia; but he always cries when he nurses Harriet, and never plays with me, as he used to do."

The artless communications of Edward were so many traits of parental excellence in the injured Ellincourt, and Celia imbibed them with a facility appropriate to their worth—"Cruel woman!" sighed Celia, "what an extensive misery have you effected! what a stigma have you cast on your *innocent* family! and to a *husband*, how indescribable must the humiliation be!"

Some days had passed in this delightful intercourse, when one evening, just as the day was closing in, Lord Ellincourt was announced at the manor-house. Edward led his father to Mrs. Mansfield—"This is Mrs. Mansfield," said he, "and that is Celia," and he pointed at our heroine.

"A most familiar introduction," said my

Lord,

Lord, with a languid smile. "This boy's zeal, my dear Madam, is in unison with his father's feelings—I am deeply your debtor, yet I cannot thank you as I ought," and his voice faltered.

"Certainly not, my Lord," said Mrs. Mansfield, "if you use *ceremony*, where a less formal feeling would be more acceptable."

"You are very kind," said my Lord; and turning to Celia, he added—"and to you, Madam, I owe much. My little girls, with whom I have just taken my dinner, have delighted me with their prattle—of nothing but Celia could they talk; but though *their* familiarity may be pardoned, I should like to know the *name* of the lady, who has thus won them from their father."

Mrs. Mansfield introduced our heroine.

"Miss Delacour," repeated my Lord, "the sister of Lady Townly! I have just quitted *some* of your admiring friends, Madam—you know Mrs. Welgrave?"

Celia replied in the affirmative, enquiring

ing with affectionate interest for her amiable friend.

"My cousin Margaret has been ill," rejoined Lord Ellincourt; "Welgrave met a slight accident, in a fall from his horse—he had quitted London, expressly on my account, in fact, to aid my languid spirits in fixing my family at the Lodge—we were called hence on a matter of much pecuniary interest to my boy; it was the adjustment of this which detained me from my little Harriet, for whose safety I should have been much alarmed, had not you, Madam," bowing to Mrs. Mansfield, "quieted my parental fears."

"Mr. Welgrave is recovering, I hope?" asked Celia.

"He is perfectly well for himself," said my Lord; "but his tender Margaret heard the report through a servant, and fled to him, unmindful of her own health; she travelled all night, and alone—her spirits were not equal to the fatigue, and she has been seriously indisposed; but I left them

them two days since, free from all anxiety, and happy as they deserve to be.—I had the pleasure of seeing *you* once," continued my Lord, turning to Celia: "we met in the library of my friend Townly."

Celia *recollected* the circumstance, and she said so.

"You have quitted London at a very prominent period," said my Lord; "there are to be two or three splendid fetes in the course of this month."

"I knew this," said Celia; "but I considered that I had *lost* some rural scenes by my protracted stay, and was unfashionable enough to pine for home."

"The *season* of fashion is greatly changed," said Mrs. Mansfield: "when I was a young woman, the birth-day closed a London career, and the town was absolutely deserted after that day; but now, the beauties of the spring, the *luxuriance* of summer, are the contemplations only of the rustic world, with a *few* exceptions; and the days are absolutely waning into autumn,

tumn, ere the children of dissipation seek its vivifying influence."

"They have no taste for the charms of nature," said Lord Ellincourt.

"Green fields, and shady groves, and crystal springs,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious things;
But smoke, and dust, and noise, and crowds delight,
And to be pressed to death transports them quite."

"It is a fearful vortex," said Mrs. Mansfield; "health and peace are its sacrifices."

"Even *more* than these are offered at its shrine," said my Lord, rising in visible agitation.

"You will take your coffee with us, my Lord?" said Mrs. Mansfield.

"Not to-night, my dear Madam," he replied; "you *will*, perhaps, find me troublesome, but you must tell me so. *Some* men may be pardoned, if they cannot draw a line in a case which offers such a solace to a *widowed* heart"—and taking Edward by the hand, Lord Ellincourt retired.

"My allusion was unfortunate," said Mrs.

Mrs. Mansfield, "it touched my Lord sensibly; he is yet smarting under his unmerited disgrace—I like his manners—there is much to admire in this man, Celia."

"His parental character charms me," said Celia, "it is so consistent with my ideas of a father's feelings; yet these feelings must enhance his misery: what frequent and painful recurrences must *he* own!—if *ever* woman was *censurable*, Lady Ellincourt is so."

"True, my love," replied Mrs. Mansfield; "but there is danger in judging too closely." Celia blushed. "I do not *presume* to *extenuate* the conduct of such a woman, nor would I in any case influence your opinions; but I really think my Lord a man of such persuasive manners, that we must be cautious in *admitting* the prepossession too *implicitly*, lest it should make us *severe*, *where* you have avowed there is *aready* seated the sure and *certain consequences* of a moral *defection*."

Celia received this admonition with that respect

respect which *all* Mrs. Mansfield's sentiments demanded; yet her *heart* was less prone to qualify the errors of *Lady Ellincourt* than *those* of *any* other seceding mortal whatever. "To abandon such a family!" sighed Celia, as she retired to her chamber, "to quit a man so evidently amiable!" and her active fancy *contrasted* the deserted husband with all those men with whom *she* had mixed. "Belford is an intellectual, a pleasing companion, honourable, generous, and sincere—*his* discernment is that of a superior mind," thought the reflective Celia; "yet his *decisions* bear the appearance of *severity*, of an imperious *foresight*, calculated rather to *awe* than to *sooth*. Lord Ellincourt was a mere *trusting* mortal, pure in himself, and *believing* in those whom he loved. And what am I?" said Celia, after a pause; "even more presumptuous than him whom I have judged. I am depreciating a being whom it is *virtue* to esteem, and exalting *one* of whom I as *yet* know little." Again intrusive *memory* recalled

recalled the words of Mrs. Welgrave; and she retired to her pillow, in the full persuasion that her *censure* was *reprehensible*, while her *involuntary praise* must be correct; for Mrs. Welgrave had *sanctioned* the impression, and *she* was the woman whose opinions were invaluable to Celia.

Next morning brought Lord Ellincourt to the dwelling of Celia. It had occurred to him that Miss Delacour could give him some intelligence, which he was anxious to attain. There are few circumstances which add more to *friendship*, than a mutual knowledge of each other's *friends*. My Lord wished to know if Mr. Belford had expressed any intention of visiting Warwickshire? "I now conclude that it was to you, my Lord, whom Mr. Belford alluded, when he bade me expect to see him (though not immediately) in the neighbourhood of Hadley."

Lord Ellincourt explained, and Celia was led to converse of the amiable Belford. "Few men possess more discernment," said

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my Lord; "he is *sometimes* called *severe*, but it is the *severity* of *virtue*—he has seen much of life, and has a proportioned *contempt* for its follies—yet no man is more *lenient*, where compassion *should* be accorded—nay, I have known him, with all the *courage* of a great mind, stand forward to *reclaim* a *basking* child of error—*he* would have drawn aside the *deceiving* veil, but *she*——in fact," continued Lord Ellincourt, "there is an *egotism* in error, and we seldom *reject* even our crimes, till we have exhausted our *fallacious* theory," and he leaned thoughtfully on his hand for some moments.

"Mrs. Welgrave expected to meet you in London," continued Lord Ellincourt, addressing Celia.

"I left the metropolis somewhat hastily," said our heroine, "yet not without enquiring for Mrs. Welgrave, who I learned was in Lancashire."

My Lord spoke of many with whom Celia had mixed—*his* opinions seemed the *revision*

revision of *her* feelings. "For my own part," said Lord Ellincourt, in his closing remark, "I can by no means consider a town life what it is represented; at least, its influence can only bind *those* whose *treasures* are in its sphere; and then I must *believe* that their *mutual honour* should make them taste the stream *together*—but when we merely migrate for a few months, when we carry *with* us fixed *principles*, and a determination, at the *same* time, of seeking *only amusement*, the *reflections* that it shall *hereafter* produce may prove of real advantage."

"I agree with you, my Lord," said Mrs. Mansfield; "and though we sometimes hear of *sudden* subversion of principles, for which that hydra-headed monster, the *world*, is made wholly accountable, I cannot believe it *possible*—the world may *dazzle* a novice, but never yet destroyed, but where some *radical* defect lent its aid; either our *weakness* or our *vanity* marks us as its prey. How *beautifully* has Mil-

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ton expressed this!" said Mrs. Mansfield. "Speaking of man, he says—

——————"Within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power;
Against his will he can receive no harm:
Reason is free, and reason he made right."

"Milton, of all poets, is my favourite," said my Lord; "yet I know not," and he sighed, "that I could be exonerated from *vanity* in my attachment to *his* verse—he has touched my *heart* by *his* record of *early* error, where, though the *woman* suffers, the *man*, even in dishonour in his fallen state, yet *preserves* the soul of man, the nice, the tenacious feeling of a heart, that on its generous confidence relied."

"You have well called it *vanity*," said Mrs. Mansfield, with a smile; "but there are *degrees* of vanity, and I am persuaded *your's* is not of the worst class."

"I trust not," said Ellincourt; "but you, Miss Delacour, will not you consider me as a self-assured egotist, one ready to

condemn

condemn others, and equally prone to extenuate his own failings?"

"I have heard of you, my Lord," said Celia, "through a medium liberal as I believe you to deserve;" and the blushes that rose on her cheek, as she beheld the *effect* of her *brief* yet *flattering* eulogium, caused her to pause—"that is," continued Celia, with a playful smile, "I made *some* allowances for the partial portraiture."

"I will prove my *humility*," said my Lord, "by henceforth trusting to the colouring of friendship;" and the tranquil expression which beamed on his expressive features, seemed to Mrs. Mansfield not merely the effect of *gratitude* for the favour of those friends, but a soothing and more efficient meed in the unaffected *record* just elicited.

Celia owned an oppressive feeling at her heart—she believed that her candour, though it had induced an unguarded truth, was yet too unqualified perhaps; for some feelings are indescribably attenuated—she

 feared

feared to trust her voice again. Fortunately, the little family from the Lodge were now seen coming through the grounds, drawn in a low vehicle by Robson and Edward. She fled to meet them, and left Lord Ellincourt with her aunt.

My Lord advanced to the window—he watched Celia as she joined his children—he saw the little creatures share the envied kiss, while Edward took the arm of Celia, and with conscious pride seemed to feel *his* confidence in her particular favour.

"These graceful traits of character in your charming niece," said Lord Ellincourt, addressing Mrs. Mansfield, "are to my *children* comforts invaluable; but their father, my dear Madam, forgive me when I say, he could not see them with the philosophy of *friendship*.—I knew I was to see an amiable woman, whenever I should meet Miss Delacour, and I now recollect a little ambiguity in my cousin Welgrave, who, when I named you as the obliging friend

who

who had interested herself in the health of my Harriet; was just to your virtues, yet evidently tenacious of saying too much; yes, I see she was desirous that I should not know Miss Delacour was your niece—in fact, that there was such a bliss in my reach, as an intercourse with this too charming girl.

> "But still I see, the tenor of man's woe
> Holds on the same, from woman to begin."

"I would not solicit *you* to woo a danger which you consider so *formidable*," said Mrs. Mansfield, smiling; "yet are you not premature, my Lord? My niece is by no means so *attractive* as many with whom you might associate—her chief charm is the *simplicity* of her character, and that, in the present day, is not a quality to endanger the peace of man."

"Of some men," replied Ellincourt. "I will not resign my permission; yet Mrs. Welgrave has, with her usual sweetness, made me acquainted with your niece in

idea, has related a thousand instances of her superiority over those of her age—she has passed the ordeal of *London* criticism—been *sought* and addressed by many aspiring suitors—has felt her own worth, in rejecting some, whom I *know* to be (according to the suffrages of rank) desirable connections—she has, in spite of satire, and general custom, forborne to waste her bloom in midnight orgies—retired, when *all* that wit and ridicule could aim, was pointed at her to thwart her purpose—and *one* proof of feminine virtue, of angelic sympathy, was poured on my ear, that exalts her above woman, I had almost said; yes, Madam, I do not blush to own that I wept over the character of *Celia* in *idea;* and I have met her, either to wear out my life in secret regrets, or to be ——what she never could accept," said Lord Ellincourt, and taking his hat, he hurried into the grounds.

Mrs. Mansfield was thoughtful—she saw, in this interesting husband, those graces of mind

mind and person peculiarly calculated to win a retired woman; and had Lord Ellincourt been *free* to chuse, no man would have been more acceptable to *her*, as the *husband* of Celia—to have given to the *motherless* children a *mother*, whose heart she knew would have been consistent with the philanthropy of *her* heart; but Lady Ellincourt yet lived;—"and Heaven grant her life," said Mrs. Mansfield, mentally—"and he

* "Who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live,"

may *he* perfect the repentance of this greatly erring woman!"

Lord Ellincourt pursued the track of the carriage, till, on arriving at a rustic arbour, he found Celia, with the children seated around her, busily employed in making nosegays.

"Here is *heart's*-ease for you, papa," said Edward, giving the humble floweret to his father.—My Lord took the offering.

 "This

"This boy," said he, "is already a sentimental friend," and he placed the flower in his bosom.

"In a child, the charm is attractive," replied Celia; "yet the feeling in one so young is a gloomy promise, my Lord; for I am persuaded human happiness is greatly diminished, by too keen feelings."

"And what is human happiness without sentiment?" asked my Lord.—"What would you place in lieu of this precious meed, so pleasant in our sorrows—so graceful in our joys?"

Celia was forming a reply, when a servant, with little George in her arms, passed the avenue. Our heroine held out her hand, and the child showed impatience to come to her.

"To what feeling does that child owe his present protection?" asked Lord Ellincourt.

Celia blushed.—"My Lord!"

"I need no explanation," he continued. "I am informed——Only say what gave him to *your* care?"

"Huma-

"Humanity," said Celia, "compassion for his unprotected innocence."

"And what is compassion, humanity, sympathy—what are these but *sentiment?*" asked my Lord.—"There is in feelings, as in language, the *positive*, the *comparative*, and the *superlative*. The two first are that common impulse of nature, inseparable, I trust, from every *rational* being. In the *latter* case, the feeling is ennobled—it becomes *sentiment*, pure, *irresistible* sentiment—a *colouring* which gives to *feminine* deeds a grace beyond the reach of art."

"You are an enthusiast, I fear," said Celia, smiling."

"And why do you *fear* it?" said Lord Ellincourt.

"Because such a character is, of all others, most open to imposition. In fact, it is a dangerous possession of an ingenuous mind, and none but an ingenuous mind *owns* the possession."

"You are a dangerous casuist," said Lord Ellincourt, in a musing attitude.—

"An

"An enthusiast is easily deceived. Yes, I *have* been *deceived—cruelly* deceived—Witness those *deserted* babes.—*You* have heard my sorrowing tale," he added.—"The power of your sex is invincible;—'tis grievous, when they use it but to destroy."

"Condemn not *all* for *one*," said Celia.

"Heaven forbid!" said Lord Ellincourt. "You will—yes, I am assured *you* will make allowances for a man situated as I am. Could you have seen that *home* which *once* was *mine*, you would not wonder that my wounded heart turns from the halcyon scene with bitterest reflection; nor could you *blame* me for my *present* feelings."

That indiscriminate adulation which Celia had experienced during her residence in London, had qualified her to judge appropriately on the hyperbolical system;—it had often assailed her ears, but never touched her heart. Lord Ellincourt was a *new* acquaintance—yet his character, from its peculiar cast, was one which rather made

its *interest* by an imposing *candour*, than *sought* it by the progressive association of mind;—or rather, might we not say that *congenial* minds *distance* time, and that the heart may be far gone in the mazes of sentiment, ere the trembling fugitive has *considered* the path? It must be so—for Lord Ellincourt already *loved* Celia; and, strange to tell, Celia, in *less* than a month from their *first* meeting, had discovered in my Lord all those qualities which she estimated;—she had learned to love him, *in* his children, and this, she imagined, would be the *extent* of her feelings, as applied to Lord Ellincourt; but when she beheld him in the graceful character of a father, when she heard him instructing his children—teaching the young idea how to shoot—"This then is the father for whom I have looked," said Celia; "and it is such a *husband* I could worship;—and he, good Heavens! *he* is dishonoured!—Infatuated, cruel woman!" she sighed, "had my fate been

been thus cast—yes, Ellincourt, I could love *you*—but it cannot be."

That reserve inseparable from a delicate passion, made Celia and Lord Ellincourt mutually miserable. At one moment he believed her an amiable friend; in the next, there was something *captious* in her character; yet he never thought of relinquishing her society. No, he would watch over, and endeavour to understand her disposition. Celia trembled beneath his gaze—her bosom treasured his sentiments, and her nerves ——Good Heavens! what am I saying? I have acknowledged *myself* a *female* scribbler—and, in truth, I am writing like a very *woman*;—but the women will not forgive me; they will say I am *betraying* what ought to be *concealed*. I am a sceptic in all worldly deceptions. I believe that the men would——.

"Tush! what signifies *your* opinions," says the reader; "the story was just getting

ting *interesting*, and you break in upon us with your *reflections*;—we shall have them divided under *three heads* presently."

Love bears various definitions, my gentle readers; and I might tell you of Celia's love, in language *multiform*.—I might, with Shakespeare, say—" She wore him in her heart;"—I might quote the tender Shenstone, and avow—

> " That she found keen anguish, ev'ry rose devour;"

or I might simply assert, what, to a *domestic* woman, is more applicable, that Celia was now so much a slave, that the *approach* of Ellincourt, though *perhaps* her ardent wish deranged her untaught feelings, that

> " His very foot has music in't,
> As he comes up the stairs."

Above a month had stolen on, and my Lord was astonished to find the days closing in. The manor-house, now *partially*

visible

visible from the Lodge, was beginning to lose its foliage—and once or twice a cheerful fire had beamed in the spacious cedar-parlour. However justly our gratitude may be excited, by the contemplation of *nature* in her varied scenes, I have always thought, that those *comforts,* which the *ingenuity* and *art* of man has devised for our *convenience,* are highly worthy of our consideration ; thus I never find myself in a room, secured from the inclemencies of the season, furnished with all that is *useful,* and, above all, inhabited by some one of those I esteem, that my heart does not imperiously tell me,

"That half our miseries from our blindness springs."

Were we but grateful, and willing to see things as they are, we should be a more "acceptable people."

"Why it is *perfect* happiness with which this eccentric being asks us to be *content,*" says my readers. How many of you possess it—yet pine for *more!* and how many

many *want* the *whole*, and languish for your *aid*, and you heed them not!

It was one chilly evening, in the early part of September, that Lord Ellincourt entered the cedar-room at Hadley; he held a letter in his hand, and, as he asked the forgiveness of Celia, he declared that he had withheld it since morning, that he might have the pleasure of delivering it personally.

"It is from Lady Townly, and enclosed to my care, by a *lover* of your's," said my Lord, "and it has passed into the hands of *another*—and a despairing wretch," he added, in a low voice.

Celia took the offered epistle; and while her cheek owned the mantling blush, her trembling fingers scarce retained the letter.

"Put the chess-board ready, Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield.—"Lord Ellincourt and I will amuse ourselves, while you read your letter."

My Lord anticipated her intent, and

Celia sat down to peruse the epistle of her sister.

"Any news?" asked Mrs. Mansfield, as she saw Celia smile.

"Quite a budget," said Celia, and in her usual strain of gaiety.

"Give us such parts as you can," said Mrs. Mansfield.

Celia complied, and soon after read as follows:—

"We had a charming *squeeze* at Desmond's last night;—my carriage was an hour getting up; and though Danbury and Quadrige assured me there was not *standing* room, I was resolved on venturing.—Only conceive how silly it would have been to give it up, when I had invented one of the most elegant dresses you ever saw!—but I wont *describe* it; you will get it in the ——— next month, and my *lovely* portrait into the bargain. It is highly amusing to me, when I see these *elegant* specimens of *art*. I actually remember to have seen the *same* head exhibited

bited in a magazine for three or four persons; but if they should *dare* to put a *Hebe*-like *wig* upon the portrait of old Snowdon, alias Bridoon, who was exhibited *last* month as the beautiful Lady Bridoon, I shall seize my pen, dip it in *gall*, and write—gods! how I shall write!"

"What an idea!" said Mrs. Mansfield.—"Standing-room at a *private* party, as it is called. Fanny's spirits are excellent—Does she say any thing of Townly and the child?"

Celia proceeded.—"We are going to leave this naughty town.—Harry has taken a *ferme ornée*, which I am not to *see*, until I go to take up my abode in it. How delightful is such a surprise!—*Entre nous*, there is something very gallant in this, after a woman has been married nearly eight years. *Apropos*"—and here our heroine paused.

Lord Ellincourt raised his eyes, and regarded Celia attentively. She was silent for some minutes. Again referring to her letter,

letter, she added—" Rachel is making rapid advances—I quite love this good Lucy—tell aunt Mansfield so. As to Harry, he is so grateful, and so proud, and so every thing, that I am almost tempted to promise you the honour of our company, *en famille*, at *Christmas*, just to let *some* people see what they could not *believe*, but by ocular demonstration. I already anticipate, that Rachel will be, not a Lucilla, nor an apish Desmond, nor a chilling *Frost*, but my dear Celia's own——."—And again there was a break; and our heroine, folding her Ladyship's letter, declared there was little more in its contents than what she had read.

Lord Ellincourt smiled.—" You will allow *us* to draw what inference we choose from the *last* passage," said he.—" Lady Townly is wise—she has had time to contrast the *advantages* of her sister, and will evince both her *duty* and *discernment*, in forming *her* daughter on so fair a model."

" You will teach me to doubt you, if your

your compliments are so prominent, my Lord," said Celia.

"Yet I know not that our friend deserves this rebuke, Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield.—"For those advantages which *Nature* bestows, *we* should be *grateful* without *vanity*, for they are perishable, and, in fact, not our own:—when we have *improved* the gracious *gift*, we *deserve* praise. I see your surprise, Celia; but do not we *justly* condemn the being who *neglects* to *cultivate* his *understanding?* Then *why* withhold praise, when we have done our part.—Nay, I really think *qualified* praise is at once a *gracious* meed, and, to mere *human nature*, an almost *necessary* incitement."

"It is impossible, in *some* cases, to *speak* even as we feel," said Lord Ellincourt.—"Nay, Miss Delacour would wholly impeach me, were I to expatiate on this subject—I must forbear, in her presence; but amidst the anguish that has, and will, I *fear*, *continue* to embitter my life, I have been looking anxiously to some system of

 education,

education, *distinct* from the present times, and I have found it. *Here* will I remain; and, until either my presumption makes me troublesome, or my *fears* are realized, I must occasionally sip from the *source*, and *behold* the *perfection* of my aspiring hopes. Already my girls have learned to decide on what is right, by *one* reference only.—'Celia says it is naughty;'—or, 'Celia says it is good.'—Nay, I sat silently observing them yesterday;—they differed about a chair, which *both* wanted, yet *neither* would *yield*. At length, after a little time, Julia bade Emma take it.—'You are the youngest,' said she.—'How foolish I was not to give it you! Come and kiss me, Emma;—for Celia says, if we don't "Love one another," God will not love us.' They were instantly reconciled. How grateful did I feel at that moment!" continued my Lord.—"How soothing was the conviction, that they *already* comprehended an infinite protector, a God whose favour they were *anxious* to gain; and if *I* owned

a re-

a *reference*, could it be wondered?" added Lord Ellincourt, rising; "*I did*—and I ask *you* to forgive me, if it was wrong.—Adieu."

"Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield, after a pause, "Ellincourt loves you. Give me your confidence, my dear child; there is no reason against your receiving *him* as a lover, save *one*. Does that *one* appear irreconcileable to your feelings?"

"Ah! my dear Madam," said Celia, "Lord Ellincourt is not a man to be seen with indifference. I fear he has already too strong an interest in *my* heart."

"You are but half ingenuous," replied Mrs. Mansfield, with an encouraging smile.

"I cannot say more," said Celia; and placing Lady Townly's letter in the hands of her aunt, she hastily withdrew.

CHAP. VIII.

"This woman, whom thou mad'st to be my help,
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill."

A MAN should either be *silent,* or *wholly* explicit. It may have a good *stage* effect, to break off with an *appropriate* pathos;—but there is usually *one* person in an *audience,* who is the *sport* of this *interesting* derangement. If any man could be excused a *rehearsal* of this sort, we would recommend Lord Ellincourt to the favour of an *indulgent* public. Loving Celia with all his heart, he yet feared that *she* would not accept him, under the peculiar circumstances of his fate; yet he resolved on knowing that fate, in all its varied bearings. Though a man should be as free from

from *vanity* as good *sense* can make him, his eyes will be open to certain indications of *favour*;—a woman neither *blushes* at the approach of a *stranger*, nor is any thing but *eloquent* in the presence of a man to whom she is *indifferent*. These are symbols of preference, on which a reasonable man may build; but if she is anxious for your *safety*—if she *sees* the coming storm, and would guard *you* from its violence—if she thought of you when *she* was in danger, take comfort—she loves you—but be *grateful*. Alas! should she love you *all* the days of *her* life, the term is *short*. Half a thousand such *tendernesses* had elicited themselves in the manner of our heroine to Lord Ellincourt, yet *he* dared not *hope*. Once he *had* trusted, but now, with the disappointed moralist, the pensively eloquent Young, he might have said—

"At thy friend's expence be wise;
Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best; but oft a spear;
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires."

 All

All this had Lord Ellincourt owned; yet again he *loved*, and he fled to the manor-house, to seek Celia, and tell her so.—"If she rejects me," said he, as he entered the elm walk, now strewed with the curling leaves of autumn; "I must *yet* love her—nature is fading," and he turned to survey the extended scene, "and *I* may soon *fall*. With Celia life owns every charm—without her, I *must* yet remember I am a father," said my Lord, when, on turning the avenue, he beheld the object of his ruminations advancing.—"It is spring yet," said Lord Ellincourt, as he drew the arm of Celia through his.—"You are going to walk—may I attend you?"

Celia could not, at that moment, find a reply, yet my Lord continued to lead her on.—"Yes, I, with all the weak pinings of discontented man, was regretting the fallen leaves, and moralizing even to sadness, when *you*, Celia, like another spring, broke on my sight, and bade me to be *grateful*."

The

The eyes of Celia met those of Ellincourt—*she* feared her secret was known.—My Lord smiled.—"Proud girl," said he, "*you* have not been too *lenient*;—no, I did not thank *you*, but *Heaven*; for though *you* should doom me to despair, I yet must hug my chains, and thank that Providence which gives you to my sight."

"My Lord, indeed I must not listen to you," said Celia, withdrawing her arm.

"Why not?" asked Ellincourt.—"Tell me candidly, why you *must* not listen to the man who adores you?"

"Are you not *already* married?" said Celia, and her trembling frame seemed sinking to the earth.

"Hear me," said Ellincourt, as he again placed her arm on his.—"If *you* considered me *free*, would you hesitate to give *me* this hand?"

"Assuredly not," said Celia, with modest firmness.

"Generous, amiable woman," said Lord Ellincourt, "believe me grateful for this candour;

candour; but, Celia, those scruples will *yield.* Reflect on this *seeming barrier* to our happiness;—it is not the *law* of *man,* the mere *bugbear* to keep one class in *awe,* and extend *another's licence;* it is a law founded from earliest antiquity, with due consideration for the honour of man. Its *record* is in that book, from whence all "wisdom proceedeth." *Your* life, my beloved Celia, is guided by the *tenets* of that book; and would you seek a cause so remote, so unsupported, as that in question, to rob *me* of happiness? All that is *revealed* was revealed for our advancement—for our imitation. Let me not enter into a detail, from which I would gladly turn.—Tell me, that I may *hope* that you do not decidedly give me over to *despair,* and I will bear your decision."

"This hand," said Celia, placing it on that of my Lord, "is your's.—If I am not *your* wife, I *will* not marry at all:—I see *invincible* objections; nor can I *wish* them done away—Let us meet as friends, my Lord;—

Lord;—let us forget *this* elucidation, and——"

"*You* could not forget it, Celia," said Lord Ellincourt, with a reproachful glance; "you could not rescind the only pleasurable feeling that has touched *this* heart for one long year."

"Is it so long?" asked Celia, with all the *naïveté* of her character.

"Yes, it is a year since I was abandoned," said my Lord, in a voice nearly suffocated by emotion.

"Forgive me," said Celia; "but I wonder, yet I *believe* you perceive your *security*, or I would *wonder* that *you* again trusted in woman."

"Ingenuous, charming girl!" said Lord Ellincourt, as he folded the guileless Celia to his heart, "there are many *women*, but few *Celias*."

Now, the question is, whether *Love* blinded my Lord, or that Celia was *really* superior to Lady Ellincourt? A short *sketch* shall suffice; for, as I have said before,

episodes,

episodes neither excite my *admiration* or are my *forte*.

Lord Ellincourt, at the age of three-and-twenty, had given his hand to a young and beautiful woman, in a rank of life much below his own. In fact, Emma Lesly was the daughter of an officer, who had fallen in the service of his country, and with her mother, " feeble, old, and poor," lived in a cottage " far retired." Chance threw Lord Ellincourt in her way; he was captivated by her person; and, *extraordinary* as it may appear, never for a moment harboured a thought prejudicial to her honour. *She* was poor—what of that? my Lord was *rich*, and he had always been considered an *eccentric* creature: he had *dared*, *even* at *college*, to think for *himself*; had never been *laughed* out of *virtue* into *vice*—in fact, he, with Emma Lesly in his hand, approached the altar of his God, with a *heart* as pure as love and honour could make it. Emma was grateful; she adored my Lord, and she *believed* it was for *himself*. They retired into Wales,

Wales, where, for two years, a fairied scene of bliss was theirs. She had buried her mother, but Heaven had blessed her with two children, Edward and Julia. The Castle of Ellincourt was retired. Emma began to wish that her splendour could be *seen;* and she tempted my Lord, in an evil hour, to let her visit London. They came; and it was *then* that Lady Ellincourt began to exist. She was admired, for she was *natural;* she was *soothed,* for she was *young,* and a *stranger* to the world; yet happiness was her's; she was *guided* by my Lord in everything; her *cards,* as Lady Townly had said, were always inspected by my Lord; he attended her everywhere; and *she* was *grateful* and *blessed* in his assiduities. Years glided away, and she made her annual appearance in London. Harriet was born; and my Lord *thought* that she *lingered* in the fallacious sphere.

However we may be termed cynical, it

is

is a fact, that *every* year elicits something *new* in the annals of folly; in truth,

> "Quæ fuerunt vitia, mores sunt."

Forgive me, courteous reader; this is a *trait à la Lucilla*—in plain English then,

> "What once were vices, are now the manners of the day."

It was *outré* to be *seen* with a *husband;* it was fashionable to be *dashing*, and *fascinating*, and animated. Lady Ellincourt possessed youth, beauty, and riches: then *she* was the creature to *lead.* The *ladies laughed* at her Lord; the *men* reviled him, but they *pitied* her; and Sir Frederic Milner, who had *lived* in *foreign* countries, who had seen the *world*, and practised the system of a libertine, declared her Ladyship's *fate* to be cruel.

Emma took *courage*, on the assertion of Sir Frederic; she issued her *cards, unknown* to my Lord; her house was filled agreeably

to

to the "usage of society;" and her *husband* was the only disappointed person of the party. He expostulated next morning; *she* was *deaf;* she had been *advised* not to hold any argument. Lord Ellincourt was peremptory; he demanded why she had *dissented* from her usual manners?

"My dear Berkley," said Lady Ellincourt, "you are becoming quite morose; really, my dear fellow, we *have* been such turtles, that our *friends* absolutely laugh at us: give me a *little* liberty; I will be a very good girl—nay, you should *prove* my love."

And here might not Lord Ellincourt have quoted his favourite Milton?—

"The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

Again,

"Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
Th' attempt itself.

* * * * * * *

For

For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
The attempted with dishonour foul, supposed
Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
Against temptation.
* * * * * * * *
Misdeem not then, if such affront I labour to avert,"

said my Lord; at least, such were the tenor of his words.

But Emma was intoxicated; she vowed she *loved* my Lord, but he had not *con-fiaence* in her, and she wept soft pearly tears.

"Alas!——————
——————trial will come unsought:
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience; the other who can know?
Not *seeing* thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think, trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warn'd thou seem'st,
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more."

And this she did. It was some months ere the dreadful truth reached the injured Ellincourt.—I would not have it understood, gentle reader, that Lady Ellincourt was *left* to

to *seek* her *ruin*—no; my Lord expostulated, *entreated*, and at length ordered the travelling carriage to be at the door *next* morning. The *carriage came*; but Lady Ellincourt had flown, had abandoned her adoring husband and innocent babes, for the *precarious* protection of a *libertine*. The effect on my Lord was that of transient insanity, and for near a month he was incapable of bearing the sight of his children. In this time, Mrs. Welgrave became his comfort; she calmed his returning reason; she besought him to let her *error* be her *punishment*. My Lord paused; he would first offer her the *power* to be *virtuous*; he would tell her *where* to find a *home*, though not with *him*. He did this. His letter remained unanswered; and the *law* severed *that* union which Love's silken fetters had wove. And here let me observe, that Lady Ellincourt was not of that class to whom *immorality* is attached. It is *illiberal* to apply it specifically. Immorality *flourishes* where *education* is neglected

glected—where a great *many flowers* are *collected*, much of our *vital* air is destroyed—collected *streams* form an *ocean*, and is there not a collision of mind? Assuredly there is; and the *intellectual* collision educes the harmony of social intercourse, the *ore* without dross; and when the *light*, the *frivolous*, the *accomplished*, rather than the *informed*, make a phalanx, what do we expect—what *ought* we to expect?—Exactly what occurs—the history of the times present.

It is already known to our readers, that Lady Ellincourt is now Lady Milner. The injured husband had retired from the sphere of his misery, to a villa belonging to Belford. Castle Ellincourt was once a paradise; but it was now to *him* a *lost* paradise—he could not return to it, and after some months, the Lodge became the residence of the deserted little family. Thus much for the love, marriage, and divorce of Lord Ellincourt.

It is now, beyond a doubt, known to my

my readers, that Miss Delacour's "search of a husband" is over; but there must be difficulties in all love affairs, and this formidable *divorce* was, to Celia, an imperious barrier. Mrs. Mansfield saw the matter in a different point of view.—"It was a *decree* sanctioned by that religion of which *she* was a devout *believer*," and she bade Celia to consider this.

It is most grateful to a *leaning* heart, when its secret feelings are anticipated; it gives us confidence—we must be *right*; and we willingly forego the *delight* of having elicited our skill or genius at *invention*, because our inclination has already *flown* out, and we are the creatures of *sympathetic* friendship, even at the moment that we are the trembling victims of a concealed passion.

The *arrows* of *Love*, when shot in the circle of *fashionable* life, must certainly meet an opposition that *blunts* their genuine intent—is it that the urchin is an enemy to hot rooms, and effulgent *glare*? The archer is, we know, represented blind,

but the *intelligence* of the little deity is wonderful; thus we scarce meet a *record of permanent* bliss effected in this heterogeneous sphere. Alas! it is not to *love*, but *levity*, that these lamentable defections must be imputed.

The men are——

A truce for the present; I will say something to them before I take my leave.

It is so uninteresting to describe love scenes, it is impossible to please *all*, I am actually timid in offering a scene of this sort, to the eye of my readers;—and a *love-letter!* I would not venture such a thing for the world.

Suffice it to say, that the day stole on, and the intercourse between the families was strengthened, as their mutual tastes were unfolded, when one evening, while Celia was employed in reading to Mrs. Mansfield, Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Belford were announced. Celia fled to meet her respected friend. My Lord paused as he beheld her zeal, and a blush rose on his

cheek;

cheek; he threw himself on a chair by the side of Mrs. Mansfield, and for a moment sat silent.

"How are the children?" asked Celia, turning to my Lord; "I expected them all the morning."

"It was 'black Monday,' Celia," said my Lord, taking her hand. "A perverse spirit had intruded amongst us, and I was forced to detain them at home."

"You were *lenient*, I trust," said Celia.

"You must judge to-morrow," said my Lord, in a low voice.

Celia promised, and the conversation became general.

"You have delayed your visit much beyond what you purposed," said Celia, addressing Belford.

"Various causes occurred to prevent my intent," said Belford; "and *compassion* was not least prominent."

Celia blushed; there was no mistaking the allusion.

Mrs. Mansfield declared the avowal was

strictly in unison with her idea of Mr. Belford's character—"I have often felt that I owe you much, Sir; your attention to my novice was highly useful."

"I must differ with you, Madam," said Belford. "Miss Delacour wanted no guide; her own judgment is her security. I have seen *many* women as lovely, *numbers* more accomplished, but not one so judicious—so rational—so fixed in principles: yet she has *left* an odd sort of character behind her," said Belford, smiling.

"Come, give us the portrait without touching up," said Lord Ellincourt. "Your camera obscura is always highly amusing."

"Well, Lord Quadrige remembers Miss Delacour as a divine girl, whose figure was admirably calculated for *tragedy;* he has wept, with *rapture,* over the delightful verses of the said lady, addressed to Rachel Townly in her nursery; and is persuaded that the fair poetess sipped the soft numbers from the silver Avon; nay, I really believe he is designing a *jubilee,* that shall bring

bring a *famine* into your neighbourhood. I would advise you to *defeat* the intent by some *ostensible* opposition," said Belford, with an ambiguous smile.

"Proceed," said Lord Ellincourt.

"Ellincourt reminds me of an affected *author*," continued Belford; "he would willingly appear *liberal*, yet he will apply all that I shall say to *himself*; nay, I should not wonder if the *record remained* with him, while she to whom it is applied will not retain a sentence of it."

"No annotations," said my Lord.

Belford proceeded—"Danbury, who owes Quadrige a grudge ever since the *whisker* business, has been active in traducing him. 'You do not think, my dear Belford,' said my little Russian friend, 'that Miss Delacour can possibly mean to receive the addresses of Quadrige; he is confoundedly poor—all the timber on his estate would not pay *his* debts.'—'Perhaps he has an eye to the *Hadley oaks*,' said I.'—'No, my dear fellow,' said the

beau; 'I *own* I was a *little* curious at *first*, for, in fact, there are so many *impositions* put upon us poor devils, that we are *justified* in being circumspect: but Miss Delacour, by Heaven, she is an angel! and I would defy Bridoon himself to run such an equipage as I will *start*, when once I can get the dear creature to listen to me.'—'She does not care a *button* for you,' said I; 'not a *buck's button*, nor a set of *buttons*.' Danbury looked grave—'She will not give her hand to Berton,' said he, after a pause; 'no, she is too *moral* for that: yet, between ourselves, Belford, that was a sad deviation of the divine Celia's; it is *well* she has *cash*, or the matter would have been differently translated."

"We must make some allowance for the gaiety of Mr. Belford," said Celia, turning to her aunt; "he has a happy way of satirizing the follies of the prominent."

"Why, dear Madam," rejoined Belford, "however you may have been *deceived*, few women have been more *conspicuous*

in

in their first visit to London than your niece. All young ladies are known to be *looking* for *husbands*, upon the simple principle, *I* presume, of its being in *nature* to *want* what we do not *possess*; for, Heaven knows, *husbands* are by no means the *lasting treasures* of women."

Lord Ellincourt sighed.

"This cold-hearted Celia," added Belford, "has *refused* a *nobleman coachman* and a *whiskered beau*; she has been indifferent to the sighs of a *lordly* poet, and half a thousand others whom I could enumerate: yet *she* was known to be in 'search of a husband.' What must we infer?" said Belford; "either that she has resolved on a life of *single blessedness*, or is she *yet* in 'search of a husband?"

Celia's cheeks were suffused with blushes.

Lord Ellincourt took her hand. "My dear Belford," said the Peer, "I know your heart, but *you* will not love Celia's *husband less* when you behold him in your friend.

friend. Yes, Celia *will* be mine;" and he led the agitated Celia towards Belford.

"I saw this," said Belford, as he relinquished that hand which Celia had presented to him: "yes, here I knew you would decide—and it was wise," he continued: "even *I* must do justice to your discernment: *this*, my dear Berkley, bears all the *promise* that a sublunary state dare hope—you will not *seek* retirement from *satiety*, but *choice*—you will not *fear* the giddy vortex, for ye are not the creatures of the day; it is for a *home*, such as *Celia* would make—in fact, it is *from* Celia herself, that all *my* plans of *domestic* happiness took rise: it is no matter how a man of *my* age has arrived at *that* age *unmarried*; the *truth* might evince his *vanity*, but it could not impeach his *principles*. *You* will be happy, and you *deserve* it; and most sincerely shall I rejoice in it."

Mrs. Mansfield was pleased by the ingenuous

nuous manner of Belford; nor did the gentlemen retire until it was late.

When a *London* party breaks up, we own *no* anxiety for the manner in which they get away—if they are of any *rank*, their *carriages* are in waiting; we say nothing of those *dinner*-hunting bucks, who *pick* their *way* over the *flags*, and *escape* at *night*, nobody knows how; yet I cannot forbear saying, that I have frequently smiled at these beaux, with their *formidable opera-hats*; nay the *hat* altogether is my *aversion*—it is vilely unbecoming—it gives a meagre appearance to the *figure*; and I never see one of these odious caricaturish things, even on a good figure, that the words of Shakespeare do not occur to my mind—

"The lean and slipper'd pantaloon."

Enough of opera-hats.—But I was saying, when our visitors *depart* in *London*, we care nothing as to how they get *home*; it

it is quite a different thing in the country—the night is dark, and there are mole-hills and ant-hills; and when a man leaves his heart behind him, he is very likely to *stumble*,, for the eyes of a *heartless* man are generally (when absent from their worship) turned *inwards*. Now Celia saw much to fear in my Lord's returning to the Lodge so late; again she recollected Belford was with him, and she took comfort. "How perfect, how distinctly are my feelings influenced in favour of this man!" said Celia, mentally; "this, surely, is *not* what is called the *illusion* of *love*—there is nothing light in the character of Ellincourt; he is *moral*, yet *chearful*—*religious*, without *ostentation*; he is strict in his *family*, and gives them an *example* in his own rectitude; he is a tender *father*, without the *blindness* of a father; he is not prone to *praise* his children for such *simple* acts as *natural* affection dictates, while he is equally *attentive* to encourage the ripening thought, and tenderly grateful

ful for such marks of *duty* as they evince."
In short, Celia *loved* him, and she thought him perfect. We *write* of him, and we believe him so; or we would not have selected *him* as the husband of Celia. It would have been easy to pourtray a character more highly wrought, more great, more wise, more every thing; but I hate *wonders*—we have wonderful *bucks*, wonderful *boxers*, and wonderful *pedestrians*; *these* are the aim of ——, and any —— may reach the goal. Lord Ellincourt was a rational, moderate man; if his feelings *were* sometimes too intense, remember he had been *deceived*; and a deceived *heart* may be *forgiven*, if it *should* own a *little* tenacity.

I am persuaded that a *novel*, though it may be a *presumptive mirror*, is generally considered a *false* glass: there may be some justice in the remark; but while I *allow* this, I think it is possible they may prove *serviceable*: but there must be *evident* traits of *nature* in the casting of the characters; we

we must not *frighten* by the *gloom* of our best *man* in the piece; the hero may be *amiable*, without despondency; just to *himself*, without judging *others*; in fact,

"La morale trop austere se fait moins aimer, qu'elle ne se fait craindre: et qui veut qu'on profite de ses leçons, donner envie de les entendre."

And such a man, we presume to think, we have allotted to Celia as a husband.

For my own part, I would recommend to the ladies in "search of a husband," to *endeavour* at transporting the creature into the country, for if he should be volatile, and given to change, the *opportunities* are less; and if *marriage* is actually the *order* of the day, it is astonishing with what *superior* facility *these things are ordered in the country*. I firmly believe it is the usage of society which destroys this *presto*-like arrangement in London; in fact, one's *friends* expect *favours*, and the *tradespeople* are so tardy: now in the country, it is the *poor* who expect our *favours* (and they

they would *share* the term friendship in *modern* times), and *they* are so *easily* pleased, and *we* are made so *happy* by their *unaffected* gratitude, that, for *my* part, I would sooner pay my vows in a *village*-church, than offer my heart through the *mediation* of a *bishop*. Thus much for simple feelings, plebeian opinions.

The manner and period for *this* most interesting epoch in the life of *woman*, had been digested between the parties at the Lodge and manor-house.

Belford, with all the tenderness of exalted friendship, was to bestow the precious *gift* upon his friend.

Celia asked the *silence* of those whom she loved, until her *fate* was decided: she knew the character of her sister, and anticipated the *badinage* to which she should be subjected, while the matter rested on *perishable* time; when it was *past* recal, her *vivacity* would *blend* in her *congratulations*, and Celia would be spared a *mental* uneasiness.

Behold

Behold Celia Delacour the inhabitant of the Lodge—see the children wondering, yet blessed in the *reality*, that *they* had a *mother*.

"Will *you* be our mama *always*?" said Edward; "will you *never* leave us?" said the sweet boy.

"Never," said Celia, "while God permits me to protect you."

"Then *you* will be *very* happy, papa," continued Edward, "for we will pray to God *every* night that he will spare Celia to us, and he always hears *my* prayers."

Lord Ellincourt paused—"What is this, Celia?" said my Lord; "should he be *reproved* or *encouraged*?"

"Encouraged, my love," said Celia; "it is the trusting *confidence* of a pure heart; yet in the *infancy* of reason, this infant moralist, I am persuaded, could adduce *a* reason for his *implicit* faith—I will try him.—Tell me, my son," said Celia, "how you are sure that God listens to *your* prayers?"

"Why,

"Why, he sent Mrs. Mansfield when Harriet was sick," said Edward; "and I prayed to God that *you* would come and be our mama, and he gave me what I wished."

Celia turned her eyes on Lord Ellincourt—"What is this?" said she.

"The beauty of holiness," said my Lord, "and the perfection of mortal happiness."

While these simple luminations of *love* were eliciting themselves at the Lodge, Lady Townly and the *fashionable* part of our *heroine's* acquaintance were garbling the extraordinary decision. "Ellincourt is not *very* young," says one; "Nor very rich," says another; "And *divorced*," says a third. Query, Which amongst ye would have *refused* him?—Not an answer! what, all mute? "He has beautiful eyes," sighs a *reflecting* relentor, "and fine teeth." "He is very *clever*," says a second, "only *too* moral." "But who could have thought,"

thought," says the mustered *coterie,* "that Miss Delacour would have made such a decision?"

"She was always *eccentric,*" says Lady Bab Blindon; "and, in truth, her *discernment* is *impeachable,* for *my* brother would have taken her 'with all her imperfections on her head;' but some people have no *taste.*"

Lady Townly sat down to write a scolding letter to her sister, for having *concealed* so important a fact, but her anger died away as she proceeded in her epistle; and Lady Ellincourt actually wept over the tender effusion of the lively Fanny.

Mr. Belford was sincere when he declared that he participated in the happiness of Celia and Berkley; he was too generous not to feel happy in the contemplation of his friend's bliss; and too *discerning,* not to feel that *she,* who was so devoted to *one* man, might claim the *respect* of her admiring friends; but in the *singleness* of

her

her heart's preference, she not only evinced the *purity* of that heart, but bade her *former* lovers be as friends; for a wife, what is she but the *reflected* image of her husband? and her mind—that glows, desponds, and is every thing to the creature that it *acknowledges* as its *head.*

CHAP. IX.

"Shall I go on? or have I said enough?"

"ENOUGH, in conscience," says my reader, if a man; "I have pored over *Cœlebs,* and with your most impertinent *Antique* I am highly offended. Could not you give your heroine a 'husband,' without *presuming* to be *severe,* and lashing *those* who are *your* superiors?"

In truth, I owe ye an apology, ye bucks, beaux, and boxers of the day, not on the *score* of your *assumptions,* but that I *descended* to speak of ye at *all*—I see your ineffable contempt—I see the *quizzing-glasses* raised, whether in the *simple* frame, or as a *whip;* and I heed neither your *visual* nor your *optic* gaze—I know you are *incorrigible,* or you would *call in* the *diurnal* prints, and, instead of *letting* the

the degrading *record* live, give a *douceur* to the *publisher,* and make a *bonfire* of your *characters.* But you are content with *garbled* praise, *masked* satire—I pity you, from my heart I pity you.

I am no Democrat, as I have said before; but I ask you, if your *fortunes* should melt, should dissolve away in the *stream* of *dissipation,* where will be your resources?—you cannot *all* be *coachmen*—we have one or two *amphitheatres;* but we could not engage the *best* boxer amongst *you* for more than a season; for you are *experimentally* informed, that *novelty* is necessary with an *English public;* and though *one* man may walk from *Buckle's* to the *post,* and from the *post* to *Buckle's,* we cannot *bet* for and *against* ye *all*—it cannot be—we are a great *commercial* city, and our riches are immense, but they are not *inexhaustible*—there are some chances in your favour; the *women* are *credulous;* there are some *exceptions*—now, for my own part, I would not *object* to give a

cocher to a *female cobbler*; they are in an equal walk—a boxer to a *charcoal artist*; she understands *attitude*, and may produce a likeness that shall rival *Gulley* himself—and to a *whiskered beau*, I could not *hesitate* to give a pasteboard *mechanic*; she might make a *bandbox* for the *breakable* bit of mortality, and hide his *whiskers* even in a *wig-box*.

"Insolent wretch!" says my reader, I mean if a man; "have we not been satirized *even* by the Buffos of a summer theatre, and now an insolent piece of antiquity takes up the gauntlet?"

Defy us, *proud man*, let your *aims* be such as claim our *respect*—it is not in nature to be *perfect*, but it is possible to be *emulative* for good. "The reputation of a man is like his shadow, it sometimes follows and sometimes *precedes* him; it is sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, than his usual size." Now, what could be more worthy your attempt, than to make the *shadow* resemble the *man*, as far as in your

power.

power. It is grievous to behold only the *shadows* of coachmen, &c. &c. &c.; one naturally *tires* of the *sameness*—you know yourselves, that *satiety* grows out of horrid *uniformity*.

Look around you, observe those natives of France, whom the fatal revolution of ninety drove hither; it would be possible to *find*, amongst the *laudably* industrious of that nation, strong emanations of *reason*, of *learning*, *blended* even with *servile* callings — intellect does not disdain to lend her light to *those* whom *poverty* has *benighted*—but should the haggard leveller overtake *you*, where is your *refuge?* ye have been *educated*, but how will it elicit itself? you will gamble, forge, commit suicide—but if you are found in the path of *honest industry*, *seeking* your *bread* by the sweat of your brow, I am no longer an *Antique*, but a *Hebe*.

Now it is so obvious that the curtain is *near falling*, that I feel it necessary to say something of the remaining *dramatis*

 personæ.

personæ. Sir Harry and Lady Townly rejoiced in the choice of our heroine; her Ladyship was by no means *displeased* that *her* family were yet further ennobled. Sir Harry esteemed the man, and might have said with Terence,

"I am a man, and nothing which relates to man can be foreign to my bosom."

They still retained their purpose of visiting Hadley at Christmas, which was now fast approaching. Lady Bridoon was left to mourn her weak credulity; while Lady Cardonnel disseminated her Ladyship's *money* and her *own* character, with an *eclat* which nothing but her *bankruptcy* (a thing by no means improbable) could destroy—Mr. Bridoon was her constant cecisbeo. Lady Bab Blindon drew Lord Ernmore, "nothing *loath*," from the contemplation of a *Frost* scene; she flattered and soothed the young Lord; and in less than a month from the close of his minorship, she

was

was announced to the world as Lady Ernmore; their *years* were dissimilar, it is true — but how *many* minors do the same?

Lady Desmond, the aspiring Stanley of the day, how shall we *relate* her *disappointment?* Miss Desmond, the classic Lucilla, had *acquired* a *taste* for her *studies*; she never *declined* to *decline* her grammar, but declined *every* thing which drew her *from* her *tutor*. The mother was charmed—she saw the fair Lucilla a Countess, and, in the warmth of her heart, she imparted her scheme.

Miss Desmond wept—she fell at the feet of her mother, and, in the words of Ovid, exclaimed,

"Interdum lacryma pondera vocis habent."

"Speak English to your mama, my sweet *Lucilla*," said her Ladyship; "I knew you would be a scholar."

"Tears

"Tears are sometimes equal in weight to *words*," said Miss Desmond.

"Assuredly, my love," replied her Ladyship, "I will not say a word to Ernmore; no, he shall be surprised. What a Cœlebs have I for *my* Lucilla! there is an *immensity* of *modesty* in Ernmore; no one would *believe* he was so *much your* slave; but I have not a doubt but he has been with Nonfit, in the *store-room*; and I observed, in his *last* call, that he took much *notice* of Maria."

"I have found a Cœlebs already," said Miss Desmond.—"Oh, mama, forgive me—I am *married*," and she embraced her mother's knees.

"Wretch!" said Lady Desmond.—"Speak! Who is he?"

"Lawford," said the young *scholar*.—"Indeed—indeed he is very amiable."

At this moment Lady Townly was announced—it was a fortunate intervention. Lady Desmond was full of invective. Lady Townly *pleaded* for the young wife, and succeeded

succeeded so far, as to *delay* the wrath of the incensed mother, till it could be discovered whether Lawford was mercenary or not. The result was *favourable* to his *character*, and her Ladyship soon attained for the young parson an *inadequate* living in Somersetshire, to which the young couple gladly repaired.

"You must *lend* Maria to them for a short *time*," said Lady Townly, when she heard that Mrs. Lawford was going to the parsonage.

"Not for the world," said Lady Desmond; "I shall have *her* disgrace me likewise."

"But she could make *puddings* for the curate's family," continued Lady Townly, with a smile.

"My dear Townly," said the awakened mother, "I will henceforth adopt no new systems. Maria shall return to her former studies."

Lady Townly—yes, believe me, Lady Townly offered *rational* advice; she was

now

now in the habit of *seeing* the *moral* superstructure of infant education expanding to her wishes; she was not *ignorant*, but *yielding*. That pride, inseparable from *mothers*, made her look *forward*—and the *prospect* was *hopeful*—the *effect* was gracious—she was at peace with herself, and with the world, and she resolved to trace the *feeling* to its *source*. She did, and the decision was concise, yet *comprehensive*.

"Positively, my dear Townly, I cannot rest till we go to Hadley," said her Ladyship.—"I feel I owe all my happiness to Celia and aunt Martha. Nay, I am persuaded we shall *yet* cull some *additional* blossoms of scientific knowledge in the *nursery* of Celia."

Sir Harry was gratified by the emulation of his Lady, and soon arranged their departure.

Lady Berton had learned, from the lips of her son, the extent of that uneasiness which had wrung their maternal hearts—they did not *cast* him from their love—

but

but they owned all the sensibility that the disappointment could induce; and while they did *justice* to the benevolence of Celia, they readily admitted that *their* son was not worthy of her: their affection was extended to the child of Jessy, for whom they dispatched a confidential servant, hoping, by associating the child with his father, they might give their wretched son a motive for *action*, and a *power* to be just.

Lady Milner read the marriage of Lord Ellincourt in a daily print: her heart owned a recognition indescribable. She was now paying the forfeit of her crime, by a life of penurious wretchedness—*watched*, doubted, yet *neglected*. She addressed one letter to Celia; its contents never transpired, though, we believe, it related to *her* children.

Have we said enough? Whom have we neglected? Mrs. Donnel—Alas! poor Patty! she had made her *fate*, and, like thousands more, was ashamed to *own* herself deceived. A *prior* wife of Mr. Donnel

made

made her appearance; Patty was chilled with despair. Donnel did not deny it, but avowed himself to have been trepanned into it in his youth. Patty was silent—she forbore to upbraid; but taking a place in the ——— mail, she fled to Hadley; and there, ere a month had elapsed, the mourning cypress at the south of Hadley churchyard waved over her *grave* and her *sorrows.*

Once more—

"Shall I go on, or have I said enough?"

"Content," says my readers; for it is usual to flatter, in order to get rid of a person, more especially an author.

The dramas of Shakespeare *live*, and will *live*, while a *taste* for genius exists. The plays of *modern* days perish, and—I say nothing. Now I, with an humility for which I *feel* I deserve *praise*, sincerely *wish* my *book* may share the *fate* of a *modern play*, first allowing me to get my *nine nights*, not *nine editions*; and as I believe this *demise* of the drama to take rise in the

empressement

empressement of the characters sketched, I should like (not forgetting my authorship rights) that these pages were rejected, because the *dramatis personæ* were so *outré* as to bear no resemblance to *life*. I know, in *this* case even, I shall have a *little* run; for you cannot discard your coaches, *cut* with your *champions* and bottle-holders, wash off your whiskers, &c. &c. &c. in a *day*; no, but in a *little* time you might *humble* me, as a futile *caricaturist*. Be true to yourselves, for God towards thee hath done his part—do thine. The women would not only smile on, but *esteem* you; they would love you for *virtues*, which, while they give lustre to the *softness* of *their* character, are at once *your guard* and your arms: to *anticipate* such an epoch, is, perhaps, *too* much. Ah! could I believe it *possible*—delightful thought! —the men would be *rational*, and the women neither *animated*, *dashing*, nor *fascinating*; but *modest*, *humble*, and *religious*

—worthy

—worthy the homage of *man* and the favour of *Heaven*.

If an author is *studious*, or rather *zealous*, in the cause of *virtue*; if she *dares* to use her *eyes*, and see things as they *are*, and is tempted to take her *pen* and speak a few *truths*, she should be *indulged*, ; she can do no *harm*, provided she never *outrages nature*. Lord Roscommon says—

"Whatever contradicts my sense, I hate to see, and never can believe."

I must agree with him; nay, I believe this said cause of *virtue* to be *injured* by the glare of *false lights*. It is so *evident* that the *people* of *this* isle have *lost* some of that *visual clearsightedness* so necessary to *mere* mortality, we scarcely *ever* meet a pair of *eyes*, but *goggles* and *glasses* assail us eternally. Then nothing could be so *erroneous* as to place before these stumbling

bling *pilgrims* on life's weary way, a *light* that should *dazzle*, rather than *lead.*

We are *aspiring*, but not *eagles;* we could not *look* at the *sun:* for my own part, if I could bask beneath the vivifying beam, and raise my eyes to the *sons* of men, with *confidence* in their *stability* and *hope* in their pursuits, I would *breathe my gratitude* to that *orb* whose silver *shadow* asks the *reflective* mind to *contemplate* its beam.

I have, I trust, spoken of *men* as they *are;* nor *exalted* women *above* what may be met in many a happy family.

And now, courteous reader, I will take my leave; if I have *offended*, I know my doom—you will term me a *libeller*; I shall be cast into obscurity, *reviled*, *criticised*, and, oh, heart-wounding stigma! called a *ridiculous antique*. Now, you know, your *tastes* lean that *way*, that *antiques* are the *rage*. Let me have a little run, and I will bear ye in remembrance; and, *entre nous*,

 it

it is not *improbable* that you may *again* hear from

Your *sincere* friend,

A MODERN ANTIQUE.

FINIS.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.